





AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF  
COUNTESS TOLSTOY

[SOPHIE ANDREEVNA TOLSTOY]

TRANSLATED BY  
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AND  
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NEW YORK B. W. HUEBSCH, INC. MCMXXII

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## TRANSLATORS' NOTE

THE circumstances under which this autobiography of Tolstoy's wife has just been discovered and published in Russia are explained in the preface of Vassili Spiridonov which follows. Spiridonov edited and published it in the first number of a new Russian review, *Nachala*. We have translated his preface in full and also the greater number of his notes, which contain much material with regard to Tolstoy which has not previously been available for English readers. Such readers may perhaps consider that some of these notes and the documentation generally are over-elaborate. But they must remember that the question of Tolstoy's "going away" and of his relations with his wife, Countess Sophie Tolstoy, and other members of his family, has roused the most passionate interest and controversy in Russia. This is partly due, no doubt, to the

dramatic and psychological interest of the whole story, but is also due very largely to the fact that Tolstoy's actions were bound up with his teachings, and his numerous disciples and opponents were watching the struggle of the preacher to put his principles in practice in his own life. The whole question of the will and the going away of Tolstoy, of the difference with his wife, and of the subsequent dealings with his property, has given rise to an immense literature in Russia. As Spiridonov's preface shows, it is treated as a kind of *cause célèbre* in which the whole of humanity is to judge between Tolstoy and his wife. The importance of this book lies in the fact that in it for the first time Countess Sophie Andreevna Tolstoy herself states her own case in full. The reader should, however, remember that it is only one side of the case.

We have added ourselves a few short appendices giving some additional information with regard to some of the more important points and persons.

S. S. K.

L. S. W.



## PREFACE BY VASSILI SPIRIDONOV

THE manuscript of the autobiography of Sophie Andreevna Tolstoy exists among the documents of the late director of the Russian Library, Professor Semen Afanasevich Vengerov, which, in accordance with the will of the deceased, have been handed over to the Library. The Library is now in the Petrograd Institute of Learning, and the documents form a special section in the Institute under the title: "The Archives of S. A. Vengerov."

The history of the manuscript is as follows. At the end of July, 1913, S. A. Vengerov sent a letter to S. A. Tolstoy asking her to write and send him her autobiography which he proposed to publish. We do not know the details of S. A. Vengerov's letter, but from the replies of S. A. Tolstoy which are printed below we may conclude that Professor Vengerov enclosed in his letter

to S. A. Tolstoy a questionnaire, and that, besides the usual questions which he was accustomed to send out broadcast to authors and men of letters, he put a number of additional questions, especially for S. A. T., asking for light upon certain moments in the history of the life and creative activity of Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, and upon the time and causes of the differences between the husband and wife, the beginning of that formidable drama which took place in the Tolstoy family.

S. A. T. answered immediately; she wrote to Vengerov as follows:<sup>1</sup>

YASNAYA POLYANA,

30 JULY, 1913.

MUCH-RESPECTED SEMEN AFANASEVICH:  
I received your letter to-day, and hasten to tell you that I will try to answer all your questions soon; but in order to do it fully, I need a little time. I shall hardly be able to write an autobiography, even a brief one.

<sup>1</sup> In the letters here quoted in full, as well as in S. A. T.'s autobiography, the spelling and punctuation of the original have been preserved, except in the case of obvious mistakes.

At any rate, *whatever* I may communicate to you, you have my permission to cut out anything that you think superfluous. As to your questions about my family, my sister, Tatyana Andreevna Kuzminskii, could answer you better than I; she and my first cousin, Alexander Alexandrovich Bers, have devoted a good deal of time to this matter and have, in particular, tried to trace the origin of my father's family, which came from Saxony. We have the seal with its coat-of-arms: a bear (hence *Bers*, i. e. *Bär* in German) warding off a swarm of bees.<sup>2</sup> I will write to my sister to send me this information, and I will let you have it.<sup>3</sup> Please also let me know roughly when you expect me to send you the information you desire.

<sup>2</sup> There is a contradiction here. In the autobiography printed below, S. A. T. says that the seal with the coat-of-arms of the Bers family was burnt in the Moscow fire of 1812, and that the Bers were not again granted the right to that seal in spite of their applications, but were only allowed to have on their coat-of-arms a hive of bees.

<sup>3</sup> It is unknown whether S. A. T. fulfilled her promise, since the documents of S. A. Vengerov, among which the information should be, if sent, are at present being removed from the late Vengerov's house to the Institute of Learning, and the examination and cataloguing have not yet begun.

The most difficult thing for me will be to fix the moment and the cause of our *differences*.<sup>4</sup> It was not a *difference*, but a gradual *going-away* of Leo Nikolaevich from everything in his former life, and thus the harmony of all our happy previous life was broken.

Of all this I will try to write briefly, after having thought it over as well and as accurately as I can.

Accept the assurance of my respect and devotion for you,

SOPHIE TOLSTOY.

YASNAYA POLYANA,

STATION ZASSYEKA,

21 AUGUST, 1913.

MUCH-RESPECTED SEMEN AFANASEVICH:  
This is a difficult task which you have set me, writing my autobiography, and, although I have already begun it, I am continually wondering whether I am doing it properly. The chief thing which I have decided to ask you is to tell me what length my article should be. If, for instance, you

<sup>4</sup> These and all other italics in the letters and autobiography are in the original.

take a page of the magazine *Vyestnik Europa* as a measure, how many full pages, approximately, ought I to write? To-morrow I shall be sixty-nine years old, a long life; well, *what* out of that life would be of interest to people? I have been trying to find some woman's autobiography for a model, but have not found one anywhere.

Pardon me for troubling you; I want to do the work you have charged me with as well as possible, but I have so little capacity and no experience at all.

I shall hope for an answer.

With sincere respect and devotion,

S. TOLSTOY.

It may be supposed that Vengerov again came to the assistance of S. A. T. and solved her doubts, after which she went on with her work and finished it at the end of October, 1913. Being in Petersburg, she personally handed it over to Vengerov.<sup>5</sup> The work did

<sup>5</sup> The manuscript of the work, as was said above, is among Vengerov's documents. It is catalogued in the first "collection" of autobiographies under N 2740, and in a special catalogue its card has a short abstract of the most important biographical data. (Professor S. A. Vengerov, *Critical Biographical Dictionary of Russian*

not satisfy Vengerov, as he did not find in it what, evidently, particularly interested him, namely, information as to the life in Yasnaya Polyana during the time when *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* were written. Vengerov wrote to S. A. T. about this, urging her to fill up the gap, to write a new additional chapter. S. A. T. did this. She sent the new material to Vengerov accompanied by the following letter:

YASNAYA POLYANA,

STATION ZASSYEKA,

24 MARCH, 1914.

MUCH-RESPECTED SEMEN AFANASEVICH:

You are perfectly right in your observation that I left a great gap in my autobiography, and I thank you very much for

*Authors and Men of Letters*, second edition, Vol. I; *Preliminary List of Russian Authors and Men of Letters and Preliminary Information about Them*, Petrograd, 1915, pages xix and xxv.) The manuscript is in a cover of ordinary writing-paper on which is written in S. A. T.'s handwriting: *A Short Autobiography of Countess Sophie Tolstoy*. The manuscript itself is typewritten and occupies twelve half-sheets of ordinary writing-paper written on both sides, or twenty-four pages, of which the last page contains only four lines. At the end of the manuscript is the date: "28 October, 1913"; place: "Yasnaya Polyana," and signature: "Countess Sophie Tolstoy." All this is in typewriting.

advising me to write one more chapter; I have now done so. But the question is, have I done it well, and is the new material suitable? Hard as I tried, and carefully as I searched for materials for that chapter, I found very little, but I have made the best use of it which I could.

In the former manuscript which I gave you in Petersburg, Chapter 3 should be cut out and the new one which I enclose in this letter substituted. The chapter had to be corrected considerably, things altered, struck out, and added.<sup>6</sup>

The chapter about the children in the new

<sup>6</sup> This is a mistake of S. A. T. She did not strike out anything in the former manuscript. She only made a few alterations, adding considerably, however, to the first half of Chapter 3, making that half a separate chapter. She re-wrote Chapter 4. In her new manuscript, after the beginning of Chapter 5, about the children, there is a note in pencil. "Go on without change as in the former manuscript." In the first manuscript the story about the children formed the second and greater part of Chapter 3. Thus in the new manuscript, Chapter 3 was greatly enlarged and became three separate chapters. Therefore S. A. T. would have been more correct if she had said that she would strike out of the first manuscript the first half of Chapter 3 and substitute the two new chapters for it, making a separate chapter of the second half. The Roman figures IV and V, marking the chapters, are in pencil in the new manuscript and are followed by question-marks. As her letter shows, S. A. T. roughly indicated the division into

material has been slightly altered at the beginning, and all the rest remains without alteration, as in the former manuscript.

Be so good as to note the Roman figures marking chapters, but divide it up into chapters anew at your discretion.

As I have not the whole manuscript in its final form before me, I cannot do it myself and am obliged to trouble you. Please also write me a word to say you have received the new chapter and give me your opinion, which I value greatly.<sup>7</sup>

Accept the assurance of my sincere respect and devotion.

SOPHIE TOLSTOY.

three new chapters, but left the final decision to Vengerov.

<sup>7</sup> The manuscript of the additional material is not included in either the first or the second "collection" of autobiographies, nor is it catalogued; it is kept separately among the documents of S. A. Vengerov. We must suppose that Vengerov intended to include it in the first manuscript, but was prevented from doing so. It is, like the first, typewritten on five half-sheets of ordinary writing-paper. At the beginning and end of the manuscript are pencil notes by S. A. T.—at the beginning: "Substitute for former Chapter 3," and at the end: "Go on as in former manuscript." The manuscript has no date or signature. Both manuscripts have been corrected by S. A. T. herself and in her own handwriting.



The additional matter did not satisfy S. A. Vengerov. He had long ago formed an idea of Yasnaya Polyana, during the period in which *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* were created, as of a "home" in which the interests of the family were such that literary interests were removed to the second floor. He hoped that S. A. T. in her additional matter would turn her attention to that particular side in the life and activity of L. N. Tolstoy, making use for that purpose of the very rich material possessed by her. But S. A. T. did not fulfil his hopes, as he told her in a letter to her and as may be seen from her reply.

S. A. T. held a different view, and she wrote to Vengerov:

YASNAYA POLYANA,  
STATION ZASSYEKA,  
5 MAY, 1914.

MUCH-RESPECTED SEMEN AFANASEVICH:  
I have received your letter; you are not quite satisfied with the new chapter, to which I reply: you want more facts, but

where am I to get them? Our life was quiet, placid, a retired family life.

You write about the 'home' interests which must have been subordinated to Leo Nikolaevich's writing of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*. But what was that *home*? It consisted only of Leo Nikolaevich and myself. The two old women had become childish and took no interest at all in Leo N.'s writings, but used to lose their tempers over patience; and their only interests were the children and the dinner.<sup>8</sup>

In so far as I could tear myself from domestic matters, I lived in my husband's creative activity and loved it. But one can not put into the background a baby who has to be fed day and night, and I nursed ten children myself, which Leo N. desired and approved.

<sup>8</sup> Tatyana Alexandrovna Ergolskii and her friend, Natalya Petrovna, who was homeless and lived with her. Leo N. writes about them in his *Reminiscences of Childhood*. They are also mentioned in Ilya Tolstoy's *My Reminiscences*. (Moscow, 1914.) Of Tatyana Alexandrovna Ergolskii, who died on 20 June 1874, Leo N. T. wrote to Countess A. A. Tolstoy: "She died practically of old age, i. e. she slowly faded away, and as far back as three years ago she had ceased to exist for us." See note 19 below.

You mention among *professional* writers Gogol, Turgenev, Goncharov, and I would add Lermontov and others; all of them were *bachelors without families*, and that is a very different matter. This was reflected in their work, just as Leo N.'s *family* life was completely reflected in his works.

It is perfectly true that Leo N. was generally a *man*, and not merely a writer. But it is *not* true, if you will pardon me, that he wrote *easily*. Indeed, he experienced the 'tortures of creative activity' in a high degree; he wrote with difficulty and slowly, made endless corrections; he doubted his powers, denied his talent, and he often said: 'Writing is just like childbirth; until the fruit is ripe, it does not come out, and, when it does, it comes with pain and labour.'

Those are his own words.

And now, Semen Afanasevich, with regard to your last remark, that Yasnaya Polyana of the years 1862 to 1870 gives the impression of a 'home' in which literary interests had been removed to the second floor—I repeat once more that there was no such

'home'; it is true that I was quite a young girl, in my eighteenth year, when I married, and I only vaguely realized the great importance of the husband whom I adored. Now I have come to the end of the page.

With respect and devotion,

S. TOLSTOY.

Nearly three years separate the going away and death of Leo N. Tolstoy from the writing of her autobiography by S. A. T. It might have been expected that that interval of time would have stilled the pain in her heart and that her soul would have found peace from her sufferings. But S. A. T. is far from peace and reconciliation. Pain, a void in her heart, a protest against some one or something are felt in every word of her autobiography. In her work she has given new and interesting information about her family; she has dwelt upon her children, the guests who visited Yasnaya Polyana, the literary works of her husband, without giving us anything new; and then she concentrated all her attention upon the

domestic drama. The domestic drama is the centre round which all the thoughts and all the feelings of S. A. T. turn.

In her story about this domestic drama she has not sinned against the truth; she has gone back again into the past deeply and with sincerity—every one who reads her work without prejudice will admit this. And yet one feels that it is not for nothing that she tells of family difficulties and pours out before us the pain of her soul. Continual references to the difficulties of her position as a mother, insistent emphasis upon the mutual love of herself and her husband, and the allusions to “friends” who entered the house, got possession of the mind, heart, and will of Leo N., and disturbed the harmony of their married life—all this creates an impression in the reader’s mind that S. A. T., in writing her autobiography, was guided by a definite purpose, that of contradicting the unfavourable rumours about her which circulated everywhere and were getting into newspapers and magazines.

This desire, which is masked in the autobiography, is definitely expressed by S. A. T. in another place, in her preface to Leo N. Tolstoy's *Letters to His Wife*, published in 1913. There she says frankly: "This, too, has induced me to publish these letters, that after my death, which in all likelihood is near, people will, as usual, wrongly judge and describe my relations to my husband and his to me. Then let them study and form their judgment upon living and genuine data, and not upon guesses, gossip and inventions."

We shall understand S. A. T.'s desire, if we consider her position. It is true that the great honour of being the wife of a genius fell to the lot of S. A. T., but there also fell to her lot the difficult task of creating favourable conditions for the life and development of that genius. She knew the joy of living with a genius, but she also knew the horror of living in public, so that her every movement, smile, frown, incautious word was in everyone's eyes and ears and was caught up by the newspapers and spread

over the whole world, recorded in diaries and reminiscences as material for future judgments upon her. Forty-eight years is a long period. Many unnecessary words were spoken in that time, many incautious movements were made; and for every one she will be made to answer before the court of mankind. S. A. T. knew this, and with an anxious heart she prepared herself for the judgment. The *Autobiography* and L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife* are the last words of the accused. We should listen to them carefully and with attention, weighing every word. If S. A. T. bears a responsibility before all mankind, each of us before our conscience has a responsibility for whatever verdict he may pass upon her. We must judge sternly, but justly.

S. A. T.'s wish has been carried out. In the autobiography printed below two new chapters are substituted for the first half of Chapter III in the original draft, and an independent Chapter V has been made out of the last half of the original third chapter.

Passages cut out of this third chapter are given in full in notes 20, 38, and 43.

Our notes are given at the end of the autobiography.

VASSILI SPIRIDONOV.



A SHORT AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF  
COUNTESS SOPHIE ANDREEVNA  
TOLSTOY



## I

I WAS born on 22 August, 1844, in the country, at the village of Pokrovsoye in the Manor of Glyebov-Stryeshnev, and up to the time of my marriage I spent every summer there. In the winter our family lived in Moscow, in the Kremlin at the house near the Troizki Gate, which belonged to the Crown, for my father was court physician<sup>1</sup> and also principal physician to the Senate and Ordnance Office.<sup>2</sup>

My father was a Lutheran, but my mother belonged to the Orthodox Church. The investigations of my sister, T. A. Kuzminskii, and of my brother, A. A. Bers,<sup>3</sup> show, with regard to my father's origin, that it was his grandfather who emigrated from Germany to Russia. During the reign of the Empress Elisabeth Petrovna, regiments were raised in Russia for which new instructors were required. At the re-

quest of the Empress, the King of Prussia sent four officers of the Horse Guards to Petersburg; among them was Captain Ivan Bers, who, after serving for several years in Russia, was killed at the battle of Zorn-dorf. He left a widow and one son, Evstafii. All that is known about her is that she was called Marie, that she was a baroness, and that she died young, leaving a moderate fortune to her son, Evstafii.

Evstafii Ivanovich lived in Moscow and married Elisabeth Ivanovna Wulfert, belonging to an old, aristocratic, Westphalian family.<sup>4</sup> She had two sons, Alexander and Andrey, my father. Both were medical men and studied at the Moscow University.

In 1812 all the property of Evstafii Ivanovich was destroyed by fire, including all his houses, documents, and his seal with his coat-of-arms, a bee-hive with a swarm of bees attacking a bear, from which we derive our family name, Bers (Bär in German means bear). The right to the coat-of-arms was not restored to my father, though applications were made by his descendants;

permission was given only to use a bee-hive and bees on the coat-of-arms.<sup>5</sup>

After the war of 1812 the government made a small grant of money to Evstafii Ivanovich, and my grandmother, Elizabeth Ivanovna, when she became a widow, managed with difficulty to educate her sons. After finishing their studies at the medical schools of the university, the brothers Bers began to earn their own living. The elder, Alexander settled in Petersburg,<sup>6</sup> the younger lived with his mother in Moscow.

At the age of thirty-four Andrey married Lyubov Alexandrovna Islavin, who was sixteen years old and the daughter of Alex-ander Mikhailovich Islenev and of Princess Sophie Petrovna Kozlovskii, née Countess Zavadovskii.

My mother's descent was as follows: Count Peter Vasilevich Zavadovskii, my mother's grandfather, was the well-known statesman and favourite of the Empress Catherine II. Under Alexander I he became the first Minister of Education in Russia. He was married to Countess Vera Nikolaevna Apraxin, who was a maid-of-

honour, a peeress in her own right, and a remarkable beauty. The elder daughter, Countess Sophie Petrovna Zavadovskii, at the age of sixteen was married against her will to Prince Kozlovskii; she had one son by him, but, after a short and unhappy married life, left him and had a liaison with Alexander Mikhailovich Islenev, with whom she lived for the remainder of her life. She died in childbirth, but had previously borne him three sons and three daughters, of whom the youngest, Lyubov Alexandrovna, was my mother.

Sophie Petrovna lived permanently on my grandfather's estate in the village Krasnoye,<sup>7</sup> and there she was buried near the church. It was said that she induced a priest to marry her to my grandfather. She used to say: "I want to be the wife of Alexander Mikhailovich at any rate in the sight of God, if not in the view of man."

My grandfather, Alexander Mikhailovich Islenev,<sup>8</sup> of an old aristocratic family, took part in the battle of Borodino, after which he was given a commission in the Preobrazhenskii Guards. Subsequently he was aide-

de-camp to Count Chernishov. The family name "Islenev" was not given to his children by Sophie Petrovna; the marriage was not considered legal, and the descendants now bear the name "Islavin." Many of them rose to high rank.<sup>9</sup>

## II

My father and mother had a large family, and I was their second daughter.<sup>10</sup> My father had, besides his government posts, a very large medical practice and often overworked. He tried to give us the best education and surrounded us with all the comforts of life. My mother did the same, but she also instilled into us the idea that, as we had no fortune at all, and the family was large, we must prepare ourselves in order to earn our own livings. Besides learning our own lessons we had to teach our younger brothers, do sewing, embroidering, and housekeeping, and later on prepare for the examination of a private teacher.

Our first governesses were German; we were taught French first by mother, then by governesses, and later by the French lecturer of the university. We were taught the Russian language and science by university



students. One of them tried in his own way to develop my mind and to make me a believer in extreme materialism; he used to lend me Blüchner and Feuerbach, suggested that there was no God and that religion was an obsolete superstition. At first I was fascinated by the simplicity of the atomic explanation and the reduction of everything in the world to the correlations of atoms, but I soon felt the want of the ordinary orthodox faith and church, and I gave up materialism for ever.

Up to the time of the examinations we daughters were educated at home. At the age of sixteen I went in for the private teacher's examination at the Moscow university, taking Russian and French as my principal subjects. The examiners were the well-known professors, Tikhonravov, Ilovaiskii, Davidov,<sup>11</sup> Father Sergievskii,<sup>12</sup> and M. Paquaut. It was an interesting time. I was working with a friend, the daughter of the Inspector of the University, and therefore moved in university circles, among intelligent professors and students. It was the beginning of the 'sixties, a time of in-

tellectual ferment. The abolition of serfdom had just been announced; every one was discussing it, and we young people were enthusiastic for the great event. We used to meet, discuss, and enjoy ourselves.

At that time a new type had just appeared in life and in literature; there was the new breath of nihilism among the young. I remember how at a large party, when professors and students were present, Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* was read aloud, and Bazarov seemed to us to represent a strange type, something new, something which contained a promise for the future.

I was not a good student, always concentrating exclusively upon the subject which I liked. For instance, I liked literature very much. I was carried away by Russian literature and read a great many books, getting the oldest books and manuscripts from the university library, beginning with the chronicles and ending with the latest Russian writers. I was fascinated and surprised that the Russian tongue should have developed out of the feeble beginnings in monastic writings into the language of Pushkin. It

was like the growth of a living creature.

In my youth Tolstoy's *Childhood* and Dickens's *David Copperfield* made the greatest impression on me. I copied out and learnt by heart passages in *Childhood* which I particularly liked, for instance: "Will one ever get back the freshness, the freedom from care, the desire for love, and the power of belief which one possessed in childhood?" When I finished *David Copperfield*, I cried as though I were being separated from a close friend. I did not like studying history from the text-books; in mathematics I only liked algebra, and that, owing to a complete lack of mathematical gifts, I soon forgot.

I was successful in the university examinations; in both Russian and French I received the mark "excellent," and I was given a diploma of which I was very proud. Later, I remember, I was pleased at hearing Professor Tikhonravov praise my essay on "Music" to my husband; he added: "That is just the wife you need. She has a great *flair* for literature; in the examination her essay was the best of the year."

Soon after the examination I began writing a story, taking as the heroines myself and my sister Tanya, and calling her Natasha. Leo Tolstoy also called the heroine in his *War and Peace* Natasha.<sup>13</sup> He read my story<sup>14</sup> some time before our marriage and wrote of it in his diary: "What force of truth and simplicity." Before my marriage I burnt the story and also my diaries, written since my eleventh year, and other youthful writings, which I much regret.

Of music and drawing I learnt little; I did not have enough time, though throughout my life I have loved all the arts and have more than once returned to them, using the little leisure left to me from a life which, in my girlhood and particularly during my marriage, was always busy and hardworking.

### III

COUNT LEO NIKOLAEVICH TOLSTOY had known my mother from his childhood and was a friend of hers, though he was two and a half years younger. Now and then on his way to Moscow he used to pay a visit to our family. His father, Count Nikolai Ilitch Tolstoy was very friendly with my grandfather, Alexander Mikhailovich Islev, and they used to visit each other at the village Krasnoye and the hamlet Yasnaya Polyana. In August, 1862, my mother took us girls to see our grandfather at the village of Ivitsi in Odoevski, and on our way we stopped at Yasnaya Polyana which my mother had not seen since she was a child; at the time my mother's greatest friend, Marie Nikolaevna Tolstoy, was staying there, having just returned from Algiers.<sup>15</sup>

On our way back Leo Nikolaevich accom-

panied us as far as Moscow, and he used to come and see us almost daily at our country-house in Pokrovskoye, and afterwards in Moscow. On the evening of 16 September he handed me a written proposal of marriage.<sup>16</sup> Up to that time no one knew the object of his visits.<sup>17</sup> There was a painful struggle going on in his soul. In his diary at the time he wrote, for instance:

12 Sept. 1862.

I am in love, as I did not think it was possible to be in love.

I am a madman; I'll shoot myself, if it goes on like this. They had an evening party; she is charming in everything. . . .

13 Sept. 1862.

To-morrow as soon as I get up, I shall go and tell everything or shoot myself. . . .

I accepted Leo Nikolaevich and our engagement lasted only one week. On 23 September we were married in the royal church of the Nativity of Our Lady, and immediately afterwards left for Yasnaya Polyana in a new carriage with a team of six horses and a postillion. We were accompanied by

Alexei Stepanovich,<sup>18</sup> Leo Nikolaevich's devoted servant, and the old maid-servant, Varvara.

After coming to Yasnaya Polyana, we decided to settle down there with Aunt Tatyana Alexandrovna Ergolskii.<sup>19</sup> From the very first I assisted my husband in the management of the house and estate, and in copying out his writings.<sup>20</sup>

After the first days of our married life had passed, Leo Nikolaevich realized that besides his happiness he needed activity and work. In his diary of December, 1862, he wrote: "I feel the force of the need to write." That force was a great one, creating a great work which made the first years of our married life bright with joy and happiness.

Soon after our marriage Leo Nikolaevich finished *Polikushka*, finally completed *The Cossacks* and gave it to Katkov's *Russkii Vyestnik*. He then began to work on the Decembrists whose fate and activity interested him a great deal. When he began to write about that period, he considered it necessary to relate who they were, to describe their origin and previous history, and

so to go back from 1825 to 1805. He became dissatisfied with the Decembrists, but *The Year 1805* served as a beginning for *War and Peace* and was published in *Russkii Vvestnik*.<sup>21</sup> This work, which Leo Nikolaevich did not like to be called a novel, he wrote with pleasure, assiduously, and it filled our life with a living interest.

In 1864 a good deal of it was already written, and Leo Nikolaevich often read aloud to me and to our two cousins, Varya and Lise, the daughters of Marie Nikolaevna Tolstoy, the charming passages as soon as he had written them. In the same year he read a few chapters to friends and to two literary men, Zhemchuzhnikov and Aksakov, in Moscow, and they were in raptures over it.<sup>22</sup> Generally Leo Nikolaevich read extraordinarily well, unless he was very excited, and I remember how pleasant it was in Yasnaya Polyana to listen to him reading Molière's comedies, when he had not anything new from *War and Peace*.

During the first years at Yasnaya Polyana we lived a very retired life. I could not recall anything of importance during that



time in the life of the people, society, or State, because everything passed us by; we lived the whole time in the country, we followed nothing, saw nothing, knew nothing—it did not interest us. I desired nothing else but to live with the characters of *War and Peace*; I loved them and watched the life of each of them develop as though they were living beings. It was a full life and an unusually happy one, with our mutual love, our children, and, above all, that great work, beloved by me and later by the whole world, the work of my husband, I had no other desires.

Only at times in the evenings, when we had put the children to bed and sent off the MSS. or corrected proofs to Moscow, as a recreation we would sit down at the piano and till late at night play duets. Leo Nikolaevich was particularly fond of Haydn's and Mozart's symphonies.<sup>23</sup> At that time I played rather badly, but I tried very hard to improve. Leo Nikolaevich too, it was clear, was satisfied with his fate. In 1864 he wrote in a letter to my brother: "It is as though our honeymoon had only just

begun." And again: "I think that only one in a million is as lucky as I am." When his relation, Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy, complained that he wrote little and rarely to her, he replied: "*Les peuples heureux n'ont pas d'histoire*; that is the case with us."<sup>24</sup> Every new idea or the successful carrying out of some creation of his genius made him happy. Thus, for instance, he writes in his diary on 19 March, 1865: "A cloud of joy has just come upon me at the idea of writing the psychological history of Alexander and Napoleon."<sup>25</sup>

It was because he felt the beauty of his own creations that Leo Nikolaevich wrote: "The poet takes the best out of his life and puts it into his writings. Hence his writing is beautiful and his life bad." But his life at that time was not bad; it was as good and as pure as his work.

How I loved copying *War and Peace*! I wrote in my diary: "The consciousness of serving a genius and a great man has given me strength for anything." I also wrote in a letter to Leo Nikolaevich: "The copying of *War and Peace* uplifts me very

much morally, *i. e.* spiritually. When I sit down to copy it, I am carried away into a world of poetry, and sometimes it even seems to me that it is not your novel that is so good, but I that am so clever." In my diary I also wrote: "Levochka all the winter has been writing with irritation, often with tears and pain. In my opinion, his novel, *War and Peace*, must be superb. Whatever he has read to me moves me to tears." In 1865, when my husband was in Moscow looking up historical material, I wrote to him: "To-day I copied and read on a little ahead, what I had not yet seen nor read, namely, how the miserable, muffled-up old Mack himself arrives to admit his defeat, and round him stand the inquisitive aides-de-camp, and he is almost crying, and his meeting with Kutuzov. I liked it immensely, and that is what I am writing to tell you."

In November, 1866, Leo Nikolaevich used to go to the Rumyantsev Museum and read up everything about the freemasons. Before leaving Yasnaya Polyana he always left me work to copy. When I had finished it, I sent it off to Moscow, and I wrote to my

husband: "How have you decided about the novel? I have got to love your novel very much. When I sent the fair-copy off to Moscow, I felt as if I had sent off a child and I am afraid that some harm may come to it."

In copying I was often astonished and could not understand why Leo Nikolaevich corrected or destroyed what seemed so beautiful, and I used to be delighted if he put back what he had struck out. Sometimes proofs which had been finally corrected and sent off, were returned again to Leo Nikolaevich at his request in order to be recorrected and recopied. Or a telegram would be sent to substitute *one* word for another. My whole soul became so immersed in copying that I began myself to feel when it was not altogether right, for instance, when there were frequent repetitions of the same word, long periods, wrong punctuation, obscurity, etc. I used to point all these things out to Leo Nikolaevich. Sometimes he was glad for my remarks; sometimes he would explain why it ought to remain as it was: he would say that details do not

matter, only the general scheme matters.

The first thing which I copied out in my clumsy, but legible writing was *Polikushka*, and for years afterwards that work delighted me. I used to long for the evening when Leo Nikolaevich would bring me something newly written or recorrected. Some passages in *War and Peace*, and also in his other works, had to be copied over and over again. Others, for instance the description of the uncle's hunting party in *War and Peace*, were written once and for all and were not corrected. I remember how Leo Nikolaevich called me down to his study and read aloud to me that chapter just after he had written it, and we smiled and were happy together.

In copying I sometimes allowed myself to make remarks and to ask him to strike out anything which I thought not sufficiently pure to be read by young people, for instance in the scene of the beautiful Ellen's cynicism, and Leo Nikolaevich granted my request. But often in my life, when copying the poetical and charming passages in my husband's works, I have wept, not only be-

cause they moved me, but simply from the artist's pleasure which I felt together with the author.

It used to grieve me much when Leo Nikolaevich suddenly became depressed and disappointed with his work, and wrote to me that he did not like the novel and was miserable. This was particularly the case in 1864, when he broke his arm, and I wrote to him in Moscow: "Why have you lost heart in everything? Everything depresses you; nothing goes right. Why have you lost heart and courage? Haven't you the strength to rouse yourself? Remember how pleased you were with the novel, how well you thought it all out, and suddenly you don't like it. No, no, you must not. Now, come to us, and instead of the Kremlin's walls you will see our *Chepyzh*,\* lighted up by the sun, and the fields . . . and with a happy face you will begin telling me the ideas for your work, you will dictate to me, and ideas will again come to you, and the melancholy will pass away." And so it was after he had come home.

\* The old oak forest near the house. S. A. T.

If Leo Nikolaevich stopped working, I used to feel dull and wrote to him: "Prepare, prepare work for me." In Moscow he sold the first part of *War and Peace* to Katkov for the *Russkii Vyestnik*, and he handed the MS. over to the secretary, Lyubimov.<sup>26</sup> Somehow or other it made me sad, and I wrote to my husband: "I felt so sorry that you had sold it. Terrible! Your thoughts, feelings, your talent, even your soul—sold!"

When Leo Nikolaevich had finished *War and Peace*, I asked him to publish that beautiful epic in book form, and not to publish it in magazines, and he agreed. Soon afterwards N. N. Strakhov's brilliant review of it came out, and Leo Nikolaevich said that the place which Strakhov gave to *War and Peace* by his appreciation would remain permanent.<sup>27</sup> But apart from this Tolstoy's fame grew with great rapidity, and his reputation as a writer rose higher and higher and soon extended to all countries and all classes.

Princess Paskevich was the first to translate *War and Peace* into French for

some charitable purpose, and the French, although surprised, appreciated the work of the Russian writer. Among my papers I have a copy of I. S. Turgenev's letter to Edmond About, in which Turgenev gives the highest praise to *War and Peace*. Among other things, he says on 20 January, 1880: "*Un des livres les plus remarquables de notre temps.*" And again: "*Ceci est une grande œuvre d'un grand écrivain et c'est la vraie Russie.*"<sup>28</sup>

In 1869 the printing of the first edition of *War and Peace* was completed; it was quickly sold out and a second printed. The writer Shedrin's opinion of *War and Peace* was strange; he said with contempt that it reminded him of the chatter of nursemaids and old ladies.

After finishing his great work, Leo Nikolaevich's need for creative activity did not come to an end. New ideas sprang up in his mind. In working at the period of Peter the Great, despite all his efforts, he was unable to describe the period, particularly its every-day life. I wrote to my sister about it:



“All the characters of the time of Peter the Great he now has ready; they are dressed, arranged, sitting in their places, but they don’t breathe yet. Perhaps they will begin to live.”

But these characters did not come to life. The beginning of this work on the time of Peter the Great still remains unpublished.

At one time Leo Nikolaevich intended to write the history of Mirovich, but he did not accomplish that either.<sup>29</sup> He always shared with me his plans about work, and in 1870 he told me that he wanted to write a novel about the fall of a society woman in the highest Petersburg circles, and the task which he set himself was to tell the story of the woman and of her fall without condemning her. The idea was later carried out in his new novel, *Anna Karenina*. I well remember the circumstances in which he began to write that novel.

In order to amuse old Aunt Tatyana Alexandrovna Ergolskii, I sent my son Serge, who was her godson, to read aloud to her Pushkin’s *Tales of Byelkin*. She fell asleep while he was reading, and Serge went up to

the nursery, leaving the book on a table in the drawing-room. Leo Nikolaevich took up the book and started to read a passage beginning with the words: "The guests were arriving at the country-house of Count L——" <sup>30</sup> "How good, how simple," said Leo Nikolaevich. "Straight to business. That's the way to write. Pushkin is my master." <sup>31</sup> That same evening Leo Nikolaevich began to write *Anna Karenina* and read the opening chapter to me; after a short introduction about the families he had written: "Everything was in a muddle in the house of the Oblonskiis." That was on 19 March, 1872.

When he had written the first part of *Anna Karenina* and had given me the second part to be copied, Leo Nikolaevich suddenly stopped working at it and became interested in education. In 1874 he wrote to Countess Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy: "I am again deep in education, as I was fourteen years ago. I am writing a novel, but I cannot tear myself away from the living in order to describe imaginary people." <sup>32</sup>

However difficult I might find it to com-

bine the copying with my maternal and other duties, when I had not got it, I missed it and waited impatiently for my husband's artistic work to begin again.

The conditions under which *Anna Karenina* was written were much more difficult than those under which *War and Peace* was written. Then we had undisturbed happiness, now there died in succession three of our children<sup>33</sup> and two aunts.<sup>34</sup> I became ill, grew thin, coughed blood, and suffered from pains in the back. Leo Nikolaevich became alarmed, and in Moscow, on the way to get kumiss, he consulted Professor Zakharin, who said: "It is not yet consumption, but her nerves may be shattered"; and he added reproachfully: "You have neglected her, though." He forbade me to teach the children or do the copying, and he prescribed a régime of silence. For a long time I got no better, especially as we had to spend the summer on the Samara steppes in very inconvenient surroundings and living on kumiss, which I could not drink. Miserable and ill, I wrote to my sister: "Levochka's novel is published and is said to be a

great success. In me it arouses strange feelings; there is so much sorrow in our house, and we are everywhere made so much of."

After *Anna Karenina*, Leo Nikolaevich, wishing to purify the literature read by simple folk and to introduce more morality and art into it, wrote a series of stories and legends which I admired very much; I sympathized keenly with their idea and object. I remember being present at the university when these legends were read aloud, and I wrote to Leo Nikolaevich at Yasnaya Polyana:

"The legends were a tremendous success. They were beautifully read by Professor Storozhenko. The majority of the audience were students. The impression which the stories makes on one is that the *style* is remarkably severe, concise, not a single unnecessary word, everything true and pointed—a harmonious whole. Much meaning, few words; it gives one satisfaction right up to the end."

I mention these works, as I have done those which were created during the happiest years of our life.

## IV

DURING the first years of our married life we had few people to stay with us. I remember that Count Sollogub, the author of *Tarantas*, with his two sons, used to come and visit us. He was a clever and amiable man, and we all liked him very much; he won my heart by saying to Leo Nikolaevich: "Lucky man to have such a wife." To me he once said: "You are, in fact, the nurse of your husband's talent, and go on being that all your life long." I always remembered this wise and friendly advice of Count Sollogub, and I tried to follow it as well as I could.

Very often Fet used to come to us; Leo Nikolaevich was fond of him and Fet was fond of us both. On his journeys between Moscow and his estate he used to stay with us, and his good wife, Marie Petrovna, often

came with him; he used to make the house ring with his loud, brilliant, often witty, and sometimes flattering, talk.

In the early summer of 1863, he was at Yasnaya Polyana when Leo Nikolaevich was tremendously interested in bees and used to spend whole days among the hives; sometimes I used even to bring the lunch out there. One evening we all decided to have tea in the apiary. Everywhere in the grass glow-worms began to shine. Leo Nikolaevich took two of them and laughingly held them to my ears, saying: "Look, I always promised you emerald ear-rings; could anything be better than these?" When Fet left, he wrote me a letter in verse, ending as follows:

In my hand is yours,

What a marvel!

And on the earth are two glow-worms,

Two emeralds.<sup>35</sup>

Almost always after a visit Afanasii Afanasevich Fet sent me a poem, and many of them were dedicated to me.<sup>36</sup> In one of them I was pleased by the, perhaps, un-

deserved description of the qualities of my soul in the following stanza:

And, behold, enchanted  
By thee, here, remote,  
I understand, bright creature,  
All the *purity* of thy soul.

When we settled down in Moscow, Fet bought a house near us and often visited us, saying that in Moscow all he wanted was a *samovar*. We laughed at this unexpected desire of Fet's, and he explained: "I must be certain that in such and such a house, in the evening, the samovar is boiling and that there is sitting there a sweet hostess with whom I can spend a pleasant evening."

Among the interesting visitors at Yasnaya Polyana was Turgenev, who came twice. The first time was in 1878, and the second when he came to ask Leo Nikolaevich to be present at the opening of the Pushkin memorial. He was amiable and lively and liked our happy family life, and he said to Leo Nikolaevich: "How well you did for yourself, my dear, in marrying your wife." <sup>37</sup>

I thank those dear, dead, *real* friends of ours for their invariable goodness and kindness to me. Many of them were more than twenty years older than I and treated me, as a young woman, with kindness.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov often came to us on long visits; he was for all of us a loved and respected friend and he was always deeply touched by our life and was fond of the children. He used to say: "I must write about Yasnaya Polyana and the life here." But his intention remained unfulfilled.

Many other guests came to us at Yasnaya Polyana and in Moscow. Among them were foreigners, Riepin, the famous artist, Gué, Syerov, Ginsburg, Truberskoi, Aronson who painted and sculptured Leo Nikolaevich and myself. My portraits for some reason were never like me.

A great deal could be written about this happy period of my life, when everything was so full of joy, interest, and occupation. I regret that at the time I kept few records of events and the interesting conversation of visitors and of Leo Nikolaevich himself;



now I remember little, for I have passed through different experiences in which I had to pay with sorrow and tears for former happiness, experiences caused by painful circumstances and by wicked people.

## V

WHEN children began to appear upon the scene, I could no longer devote myself entirely to my husband's service and to the constant sympathy with his work. We had many children: I bore thirteen. Ten of them I nursed myself, on principle and because I wanted to do so. I did not want to have wet-nurses. Owing to difficulties, I had to give up the principle on three occasions.

The children were growing up, and at that time we were of one mind with regard to their education. Leo Nikolaevich always himself engaged or found teachers and governesses for them. We parents taught them a great deal ourselves. Their father wanted to give them a most refined education, and to the boys an exclusively classical one. He learnt Greek himself with

great labour in order to teach our eldest son, Serge, whom Leo Nikolaevich wanted to go to the university. "By that time Tanya will be grown up," he would say, "and we shall have to bring her out." I had to teach the children those subjects for which at the time there were no teachers, French, German, music, drawing, Russian literature, and even dancing. I knew very little English. Leo Nikolaevich, who also at that time had a poor knowledge of the language, began teaching it to me, and the first book which we read together in English was Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*.<sup>38</sup> Later on I easily acquired the language from the English governess whom we had for the children.

What we were chiefly concerned for in the education of the elder children, we obtained in 1881 when we moved to Moscow for the winter. Our eldest son, Serge, entered the university; our two other sons, Ilya and Leo, were sent by Leo Nikolaevich to L. I. Polivanov's classical school. He sent our daughter, Tanya, to the School of Painting and Sculpture, and he took her out to her first fancy-dress ball at the Olsufevs, as I

was expecting my eighth child, Alesha, born on 31 October, and did not go out anywhere.

The move to Moscow and our life in the town turned out for both of us to be much more difficult than we could have anticipated. It is true that Leo Nikolaevich wrote to me from the Samara steppes, where he had gone for a kumiss cure: "If God will, I shall come and help you in your Moscow affairs willingly—you have only to give me the order"; but he was unable to carry out his word and he suddenly fell into despondency. Now that he was away from the country and nature, the impressions of town life, which he had forgotten, but which now came fresh to him, with its poverty on the one side and its luxury on the other, threw him into despondency, so that it often made me cry to see his moods which became much worse after he took part in the Moscow census. City life was for the first time presented, as it were, to his impressionable mind. But a return to our previous life was impossible, as the children's education had just been begun and had become the principal problem

in our life. With sadness I had to look back and recognize that the nineteen years which we had spent continuously at Yasnaya Polyana were the happiest time of our lives. Besides the family and the copying for Leo Nikolaevich, what a number of good occupations I had in the country! Sick peasants used to come to me and, as far as I could, I used to treat them, and I was fond of the work. We planted apple trees and other trees and took pleasure in watching them grow. Once we had a school in the house and the village children were taught with ours as they grew up. But this did not last long, because we had to have our own children educated and we wanted to make their life as varied as possible. In the winter the whole family, including us parents, the tutors, and governesses, skated on the ice or tobogganed on the hills, and we cleared the snow from the pond ourselves. Every summer, for twenty years, the family of my sister, T. A. Kuzminskii, came to Yasnaya Polyana, and our life was so merry that the summer with us was a continuous holiday. There were various games like cro-

quet and tennis, amateur theatricals, and other amusements like bathing, gathering mushrooms, boating, and driving, and besides these, the summer was devoted to music, and concerts arranged by the children and grown-ups, with piano, violin, and singing.

One summer all the young people worked on the land, and with Leo Nikolaevich gathered in the crops for the poor peasant women. Already at the same time, *i. e.* at the end of the 'seventies and beginning of the 'eighties, he felt in him that inner crisis, that desire for a different, more simple and spiritual, life which never left him until the end of his life. But there also came an end to the undisturbed happiness with which we had lived so many years. At the beginning of his spiritual crisis Leo Nikolaevich, as is well known, gave himself ardently to the orthodox faith and church. He saw himself united in it with the people. But gradually he left it, as his later writings show. It is difficult to trace the steps of this crisis in Leo Nikolaevich, and when it

was exactly that I, with my intensely hard-working life and maternity, could no longer live so completely in my husband's intellectual interests, and he began to go further and further away from family life. We had already nine children, and the older they grew, the more complicated became the problem of their education and our relations to them. But their father was withdrawing himself more and more from them, and at last he refused altogether to have anything to do with the education of his children, on the plea that they were being taught according to principles and a religion which he considered harmful for them.

I was too weak to be able to solve the dilemma, and I was often driven to despair; I became ill, but saw no way out. What could be done? Go back to the country and give up everything? But Leo Nikolaevich did not seem to want that either. Against my will he bought a house in Moscow, and thus seemed to fix our life in the town.<sup>39</sup>

The difference between my husband and myself came about, not because *I* in my heart

went away from him. I and my life remained the same as before. It was *he* who went away, not in his everyday life, but in his writings and his teachings as to how people should live. I felt myself unable to follow his teachings myself. But our personal relations were unaltered: we loved each other just as much, we found it just as difficult to be parted even temporarily, and, as an old and respected friend of our family expressed it in a letter to me: "Not a jot could be added to or taken from either of you without disturbing the wonderful harmony of your private spiritual life in the midst of the multitude of people surrounding you. . . ."

Only rarely was our happiness clouded and the harmony broken by flashes of mutual jealousy, which had no ground at all. We were both hot-tempered and passionate; we could not bear the thought that anyone should alienate us. It was just this jealousy which woke up in me with terrible force when, towards the end of our life, I realized that my husband's soul, which had been open



to me for so many years, had suddenly been closed to me irrevocably and without cause, while it was opened to an outsider, a stranger.<sup>40</sup>

## VI

IN four years we had suffered five losses in the family. The two aunts died, in 1874 Tatyana Alexandrovna Ergolskii, and in 1875 Pelageya Ilinishna Yushkov. Also three of our young children died; I caught whooping-cough from them, and at the same time became ill with peritonitis which brought on child-birth prematurely and I was on the point of death.

Whether these events influenced Leo Nikolaevich or whether there were other causes, his discontent with life and his seeking for truth became acute. Everyone knows from his *Confession* and other works that he even contemplated hanging himself, when he did not find satisfaction in his seeking. I could not feel as happy as before, when my husband, though without saying it frankly, threatened to take his life, as

later he threatened to go away from his family. It was difficult for me to discover the causes of his despair or to induce myself to believe in them.<sup>41</sup> Our family lived its normal, good life, but it no longer satisfied him; he was looking for the meaning of life in something different; he was seeking for belief in God, he always shuddered at the thought of death, and he could not find that which might comfort him and reconcile him with it. At one time he would speak to Count Bobrinsky<sup>42</sup> of the teaching of Radstock,<sup>43</sup> at another to Prince S. S. Uru-sov<sup>44</sup> of the orthodox faith and church, at another with pilgrims and sectaries, and later with bishops, monks, and priests. But nobody and nothing satisfied Leo Nikolaevich or put his mind at rest. A spirit which rejected the existing religions, the progress, science, art, family, everything which mankind had evolved in centuries, had been growing stronger and stronger in Leo Nikolaevich, and he was becoming gloomier and gloomier. It was as though his inner eye was turned only to evil and suffering, as though all that was joyful, beautiful, and

good had disappeared. I did not know how to live with such views; I was alarmed, frightened, grieved. But with nine children I could not, like a weather-cock, turn in the ever changing direction of my husband's spiritual going away. With him it was a passionate, sincere seeking; with me it would have been a silly imitation, positively harmful to the family. Besides, in my innermost heart and beliefs I did not wish to leave the church to which from my childhood I had always turned in prayer. Leo Nikolaevich was himself for nearly two years at the beginning of his seeking extremely orthodox and observed all rituals and feasts. At the time the family also followed his example. *When* exactly we parted from him and over what, I do not know, I cannot remember.

Leo Nikolaevich's denial of the church and orthodoxy had a sharp contrast in his recognition of the efficacy and wisdom of Christ's teaching, which he considered incompatible with the doctrine of the church. Personally I could have no difference with him regarding the Gospel, since I considered the Gospel to be the foundation of the

orthodox faith.<sup>45</sup> When he accepted Christ's teaching and tried to live in accordance with the Gospel, Leo Nikolaevich began to suffer through our apparently luxurious mode of life, which I could not alter. I simply did not understand why I should alter it, nor could I alter conditions which had not been created by ourselves. If I had given away all my fortune at my husband's desire (I don't know to whom), if I had been left in poverty with nine children, I should have had to work for the family—to feed, do the sewing for, wash, bring up my children without education. Leo Nikolaevich, by vocation and inclination, could have done nothing else but write.<sup>46</sup> He was always rushing off from Moscow to Yasnaya Polyana; he lived alone there, read, wrote, and thought out his work. I bore these partings from him with difficulty, but I considered them necessary for my husband's intellectual work and peace of mind.

In my turn, as I grew older, the external and internal complexity of life made me look seriously into its demands, and again, as in my early youth, I turned to philosophy, to

the wisdom of the thinkers who had preceded us. At that time, about 1881 or 1882, Prince Leonid Dmitrievich Urusov,<sup>47</sup> an intimate friend who often visited us and who was Deputy Governor of the Tula Province, translated into Russian *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* and brought us the book to read. The thoughts of that royal sage produced a great impression on me. Later Prince Urusov gave me the works of Seneca in a French translation. The brilliant style and richness of thought in that philosopher so attracted me that I read his works through twice. I then read in succession various philosophers, buying their books and copying out the ideas and sayings which struck me. I remember how impressed I was by Epictetus's thoughts on death. I found Spinoza very difficult to understand, but I became interested in his Ethics and especially in his explanation of the conception of God. Socrates, Plato, and other philosophers, but particularly the Greeks, enchanted me, and I can say that these sages helped me greatly to live and to think. Later on I also tried to read modern philosophers; I read Scho-

penhauer and others, but I much preferred the ancients. Of Leo Nikolaevich's philosophical works I liked and understood best his book *On Life*, and I translated it into French with the assistance of M. Tastevin. I worked hard at that translation, being particularly ill at the time and expecting the birth of our last child, Vanichka. While working conscientiously at the translation, I often went for advice to my husband and to the philosophers, N. Y. Grot and V. S. Solovev.

I always very much liked writing of whatever kind. When Leo Nikolaevich was writing his *A. B. C.* and *Four Reading-Books*, he used to intrust to me the work of making up sentences and of re-telling and translating them so as to adapt them to the Russian language and customs. I also wrote the small story *Sparrows* and others.

On the appearance of *Kreutzer Sonata*, which I never liked, I wrote a story from the woman's point of view, but I did not publish it. Later on I wrote a tale, *A Song without Words*. I got the idea for it by seeing girls at a concert behave strangely to

a famous pianist. They kissed his goloshes, tore his handkerchief to pieces and altogether acted as if they were mad. What has music to do with all that? I wanted to convey the idea that our attitude towards art, as towards nature, must be chaste, *i. e.* pure, without any mixture of base human passions.

When I taught the children, I wrote a Russian grammar from which they quickly learnt to write correctly. Unfortunately the Russian teacher, who much approved of my work, lost it.

I used to invent stories to tell to my children, and I wrote some of them down and later published them with illustrations. In the first story, *Skeleton Aurelias*, I used an idea of Leo Nikolaevich's. He began to write the story, but the beginning was lost. Whether it was lost with his suitcase,<sup>48</sup> or whether it was carried off with the other MSS., I do not know.<sup>49</sup>

I always regarded my literary work with a certain contempt and irony, considering it in the nature of a joke. For instance, after reading various writings of the decadents, I



tried to imitate them, and, for a joke, wrote prose poems under the title *Groans*. They were published, without my name, and without the author being known, in the *Journal Dlya Vsvekh* for March, 1904.

I remember two others of my writings, translations which Leo Nikolaevich commissioned me to do. One was from the German, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*,<sup>50</sup> which he afterwards corrected himself, and the other from English, *On the Sect of the Bahaists*.<sup>51</sup>

I also published various articles in newspapers. The most important were: my appeal for funds for the famine-stricken on 3 November, 1891; my letter to the *Metropolitans* and *Synod* on Leo Nikolaevich's excommunication, which had deeply revolted and pained me.<sup>52</sup> I also published an article, *A Recollection of Turgenev*, in the *Orlovskii Vyestnik*, a critical article on Andreyev, and others.<sup>53</sup>

If I ever wrote anything of value, it was the seven thick note-books, under the title *My Life*.<sup>54</sup> In them I described all my long life up to 1897. When after the death

of Leo Nikolaevich I was, quite illegally, forbidden access to the Historical Museum, where I had placed for safe keeping all my husband's papers, diaries, letters, note-books, as well as my own, I could not continue my work without materials, and three years of my life, which was drawing to a close, were lost to the work. And who knows better than I the life of Leo Nikolaevich? It was I myself who in 1894 placed those documents first in the Rumyantsev Museum, and later during its repair transferred them to the Historical Museum, where they now lie awaiting the verdict as to their fate from the courts of law.<sup>55</sup>

## VII

IN the summer of 1884 Leo Nikolaevich worked a great deal on the land; for whole days he mowed with the peasants, and when tired out he came home in the evenings, he used to sit gloomy and discontented with the life lived by the family. That life was in discordance with his teaching, and this tormented and pained him. At one time he thought of taking a Russian peasant woman, a worker on the land, and of secretly going away with the peasants to start a new life; he confessed this to me himself. At last, on 17 June, after a little quarrel with me about the horses, he took a sack with a few things on his shoulder and left the house, saying that he was going away for ever, perhaps to America, and that he would never come back. At the time I was beginning to feel the pains of childbirth. My husband's

behaviour drove me to despair, and the two pains, of the body and of the heart, were unendurable. I prayed to God for death. At four o'clock in the morning Leo Nikolaevich came back, and, without coming to me, lay down on the couch downstairs in his study. In spite of my cruel pains I ran down to him; he was gloomy and said nothing to me. At seven o'clock that morning our daughter Alexandra was born. I could never forget that terrible, bright June night.

Once more in 1897 Leo Nikolaevich had the desire to go away; but no one knew of it. He wrote me a letter which, at his desire, was handed over to me only after his death.<sup>56</sup> But that time also he did not go away.

In the autumn of that year Leo Nikolaevich gave me a power-of-attorney to manage all his affairs, including the publication of his works. Inexperienced and without a farthing, I energetically began to learn the business of publishing books, and then of selling and subscribing L. N. Tolstoy's works. I had to manage the estates and in

general all his affairs. How difficult it was, with a large family and with no experience! I had more than once to appeal to the censor, and for that purpose I had to go to Petersburg.

Once Leo Nikolaevich called me into his study and asked me to take over in full ownership all his property, including his copyrights. I asked him what need there was for that, since we were so intimate and had children in common. He replied that he considered property an evil and that he did not wish to own it. "So you wish to hand over that evil to me, the creature nearest to you," I said, in tears; "I do not want it and I shall take nothing." So I did not take my husband's property, but I managed his affairs under the power-of-attorney, and it was only some years afterwards that I agreed to a general division of the property, and the father himself apportioned the shares to each of the children and to myself. He renounced altogether the copyright of his books written after 1881.<sup>57</sup> But he retained until the end of his life the copyright of the previous books. The division was

completed in 1891, and Yasnaya Polyana was given to our youngest son, Vanichka, and to myself.

In the same year 1891 an important event happened to me. I went to Petersburg to petition the authorities to remove the ban on the thirteenth volume of L. N. Tolstoy's works, which contained *Kreutzer Sonata*. I made an application to the Emperor Alexander III. He graciously received me, and, after I had left, he ordered the ban on the forbidden book to be removed, although he expressed a desire that *Kreutzer Sonata* should not be sold as a separate volume. But some one secretly published the story, and envious persons calumniated me by telling the Tsar that I had disobeyed his will. The Sovereign was, naturally, highly displeased, and, as Countess A. A. Tolstoy told me he said: "If I was mistaken in that woman, then there are no truthful people in the world." I got to know about this too late to clear up the matter, and I was deeply grieved, the more so because the Tsar died that autumn without ever knowing the truth.

## VIII

THE year 1891 and the two following years were memorable for us because of the assistance given by the family to the famine-stricken Russian people. Distressed by the news which we received about the calamity, I decided to publish in the newspapers an appeal for subscriptions. What a joy to me was the ardent sympathy of the good people who sent generous donations, often accompanied by moving letters! The four younger children remained with me in Moscow. It was extraordinarily difficult for me to part from my husband and the elder children who were exposing themselves to many dangers. My only comfort was that I, too, was taking part in the good work. I bought trucks of corn, beans, onions, cabbage, everything needed for the feeding centres where the famine-stricken poor from the

villages were fed. To pay for this I received money which was sent to me in considerable sums. From the material sent to me by textile manufacturers I had underclothing made by poor women for small wages, and I sent it to the places where it was needed most, chiefly for those suffering from typhoid.

It might have been thought that this work would have satisfied Leo Nikolaevich. And at first it did, but he became disappointed with this too, and he began again to dream of a great act of renunciation, as he expressed it in his diary. He was annoyed with the family, though he did love us. He was often angry with me. We were what stood in the way of his carrying out his dream of a free, new life, of an act of renunciation. At times he would soften, and he wrote, for instance in his diary: "It is good to be with Sonya. Yesterday I thought, as I saw her with Andryusha and Misha, what a wonderful wife and mother she is in one sense." Remarks like that, when they were made directly to me, comforted me; but, on the other hand, his obstinate rejection of all our



method of life pained and tormented me.

The famine relief work nearly cost my son Leo his life; he was at the time a young undergraduate and worked on his own account on famine relief in the Samara Province. His health, especially after an attack of typhus, broke down completely, and for a long time afterwards I suffered to see him sinking. But he recovered after being ill for two years. In 1895 our youngest son, Vanichka, died; he was seven years old, a general favourite, extraordinarily like his father, a clever, sensitive child, not long for this earth, as people say of such children. This was the greatest sorrow of my life, and for long I could find neither peace nor comfort.<sup>58</sup> At first I spent whole days in churches and cathedrals; I also prayed at home and walked in my garden, where I remembered the dear little slim figure of my boy. "Where are you, where are you, Vanichka?" I used often to cry, not believing in my loss. At last, after having spent nine hours one day in the Archangel Cathedral—it was a fast-day—I was walking home and got soaked in a violent storm of

rain. I became very ill and my life was despaired of, but on Easter night at the ringing of the bells I came to myself and reëntered upon my sorrowful existence. Everybody about me, and particularly my husband and two eldest daughters, looked after me with extraordinary goodness and tenderness. This gladdened and comforted me.

In the spring my sister, T. A. Kuzminskii, arrived and took me off with her to Kiev, and that disposed me still more to religion and made a strong impression on me.\* My depression and loss of interest in everything continued during the summer, and it was only by chance and quite unexpectedly that my state of mind was changed—by music. That summer there was staying with us a well-known composer and superb pianist.<sup>59</sup> In the evenings he used to play chess with Leo Nikolaevich, and afterwards, at the request of all of us, he often played the piano. Listening to the wonderful music of Beethoven, Mozart, Chopin, and others,

\* [Kiev is famous for its churches and monasteries.]

superbly executed, I forgot for a time my sharp sorrow, and I used morbidly to look forward to the evening, when I should again hear that wonderful music

Thus the summer passed, and in the autumn I engaged a music mistress and, at the age of fifty-two, began again to practise and learn to play. As time went on, I made little progress. But I went to concerts, and music saved me from despair. Leo Nikolae-vich wrote somewhere about music: "Music is a sensual pleasure of hearing, just as taste is a sensual pleasure. I agree that it is less sensual than taste, but there is no moral sense in it." I could never share this view. He himself often cried, when his favourite pieces were played. Does the pleasure of taste make one cry? Music always acted upon me like something soothing and elevating. All the petty, everyday troubles lost their meaning. When I heard the Chopin sonata with the funeral march or certain Beethoven sonatas, I often had the desire to pray, to forgive, to love, and to think of the infinite, spiritual, myste-

rious, and beautiful, just as the sounds themselves do not say anything definite, but make one think, dream, and rejoice vaguely and beautifully.

## IX

IN August, 1896, Leo Nikolaevich suggested that I should go with him and his sister, Marie Nikolaevna, to the monastery near Shamardin. From there we went to the Optina Monastery, where I fasted. While I confessed, Leo Nikolaevich walked round the cell of the venerable monk, Father Gerasim, but he did not come in.

After Vanichka's death our family life was no longer happy. Gradually the other children married and the house became empty. The parting with our daughter was especially hard. Leo Nikolaevich's health began to be bad, and in September, 1901, the doctors after a consultation ordered him off to the south, to the Crimea. Countess Panin kindly lent us her magnificent house in Gaspra, where our whole family spent nearly ten months. Leo Nikolaevich's

health not only did not improve, it grew worse. He was ill in Gaspra from one infectious disease after another, and it is with pain in my heart that I remember how I used to sit at night by my husband's bed during nearly the whole of those ten months. We took it in turns to sit by him, I, my daughters, the doctors, friends, and above all my son, Serge. How much I used to go through and think over during those nights! <sup>60</sup>

We did not go back again to our life in Moscow, and the doctors and I decided that it was best for Leo Nikolaevich to live in Yasnaya Polyana, where he was born and bred.

After making up our minds on our return from the Crimea to remain in the country, during the following years we lived quietly and peacefully, all occupied with our own work. I worked hard at writing my memoirs, under the title *My Life*; I often went to Moscow on business in connection with Leo Nikolaevich's publications, and then every day in the morning I used to sit in the Historical Museum, copying from

the diaries, letters, and note-books the material which I wanted for my work. It gave me great pleasure, that work upstairs in the tower of the museum, in complete solitude, surrounded by such interesting papers. I did not arrange the MSS., thinking that I might leave that for others, and considering it more useful to write my reminiscences, as I did not anticipate a long life or that my memory would remain fresh.

Moreover by mere accident I took to painting passionately, for it always attracted me. In Petersburg in the Tauric Palace a very good and interesting exhibition of old and modern portraits was opened, and we were asked to lend all our family portraits from Yasnaya Polyana. It seemed to me most unpleasant to have the walls of the drawing-room bare, and with my usual boldness I began copying the portraits before they were removed. I had never studied painting, but I loved it, like all the arts, and I was terribly excited and worked for whole days, and often the nights as well. As formerly with music, I was completely carried away by painting. Leo Nikolaevich laugh-

ingly said that I had caught a disease called "portraititis," and that he was afraid for my sanity. The most successful of my attempts was a copy of Leo Nikolaevich's portrait by Kramskoi. Later I tried to paint landscapes and flowers from nature, but extreme short-sightedness put me at a great disadvantage, and I was dissatisfied with my want of skill. But I do not regret that I took up music and painting, however unskilfully, towards the end of my life. One only thoroughly understands any art when one practises it, however badly.

My last attempts were water-colour paintings of all the Yasnaya Polyana flora and of all the fungi of the Yasnaya Polyana woods.



## X

IN 1904 I had to endure the pain of my son, Andrey, leaving to fight in the war against Japan. In my heart I was opposed to war as to any other kind of murder, and it was with a peculiar pain in my heart that I saw my son off at Tambov and with other mothers looked at the carriages full of soldiers—our sons doomed to death.

A happy event for our family in 1905 was the birth of an only child to our daughter, Tatyana Lvovna Sukhotin. This granddaughter, as she grew up, was a favourite of Leo Nikolaevich and of the whole family.

In 1906 I underwent a serious operation, performed by Professor V. F. Snegirev in Yasnaya Polyana. How quietly I prepared myself for death, how happy I felt, when the servants, saying good-bye to me, cried

bitterly! I felt a strange sensation, when I fell asleep under the anaesthetic which was given to me: it was new and significant. All external life in its complicated setting, especially of towns, flashed before my inner vision like a quickly changing panorama. And how insignificant human vanity appeared to me! I seemed to be asking myself: what, then, is important? One thing: if God has sent us on to the earth and we are to live, then the most important thing is to help one another in whatever way possible. To help one another to live. I think the same now.

The operation was quite successful, but it seemed as though the will of fate, having aimed at taking my life, wavered and then removed its hand to our daughter Masha. I recovered, and that lovely, unselfish, spiritual creature, Masha, died of pneumonia in our house two and a half months after my operation. This sorrow was a heavy weight on our life and aging hearts. The previous rift, the reproaches and unpleasantness ceased for a while and we humbled ourselves before fate. The time passed in our

usual occupations, and Leo Nikolaevich, as a distraction, played cards with his children and friends; he was very fond of whist. In the mornings he wrote, and every afternoon he rode; he lived the most quiet and regular life. He was, however, often worried by visitors who tired him, by applicants, and by letters in which people disagreed with his teaching and reproached him with his way of life, or asked him for money or to get them jobs.

These reproaches and the interference of outsiders in our peaceful family life ruined it. Even before this the influence of outside people was creeping in and towards the end of Leo Nikolaevich's life it assumed terrifying dimensions. For instance, these outsiders frightened Leo Nikolaevich with the prediction that the Russian Government would send the police and seize all his papers. On that pretext they were removed from Yasnaya Polyana, and, therefore, Leo Nikolaevich could no longer work at them, as he had not the *whole* material. Eventually with difficulty I succeeded in getting back seven thick note-books containing my

husband's diaries which are now in the possession of our daughter Alexandra; but the affair led to strained relations with the man who had them in his keeping and he ceased his daily visits.<sup>61</sup>

## XI

IN 1895 Leo Nikolaevich wrote a letter in which, as a request to his heirs, he expressed the desire that the copyright in his works should be made public property, and in which he entrusted the examination of his MSS. after his death to Nikolai Nikolaevich Strakhov, to Chertkov, and to me.<sup>62</sup> The letter was in the keeping of my daughter Masha and was destroyed,<sup>63</sup> and in its place in September, 1909, a will was made at Chertkov's house in Krekshino not far from Moscow, where Leo Nikolaevich and several other persons were staying at the time. The will turned out to have been drawn incorrectly and to be invalid, a fact which the "friends" soon found out.<sup>64</sup>

Our journey home from Krekshino through Moscow was terrible. One of the intimates had informed the press that on

such and such a day at a certain hour Tolstoy would be at the Kursk Station. Several thousands of people came there to see us off. At moments it seemed to me, as I walked arm in arm with my husband and limped on my bad leg, that I should be choked, fall down, and die. In spite of the fresh, autumnal air, we were enveloped in a hot, thick atmosphere.

This had a very serious effect upon Leo Nikolaevich's health. Just after the train had passed Schekino station, he began to talk deliriously and lost all consciousness of his surroundings. A few minutes after our arrival at home he had a prolonged fainting fit and this was followed by a second. Luckily there was a doctor in the house. After this I suffered more and more from a painful, nervous excitement: day and night I watched my husband to see when he would go for a ride or a walk by himself, and I awaited his return anxiously, for I was afraid that he might have another fainting fit or simply fall down somewhere where it would be difficult to find him.

Owing to these agitations and to the

difficult and responsible work connected with L. N. Tolstoy's publications, I continually grew more nervous and worried, and my health broke down completely.<sup>65</sup> I lost my mental balance, and, owing to this, I had a bad effect upon my husband. At the same time Leo Nikolaevich began continually to threaten to leave the house and his "intimate" friend \* carefully prepared, together, with the lawyer M., a new and correct will \* which was copied by Leo Nikolaevich himself on the stump of a tree in the forest on 23 July, 1910.<sup>66</sup>

This was the will which was proved after his death.

In his diary he wrote at the time, among other things: "I very clearly see my mistake; I ought to have called together all my heirs and told them my intention; I ought not to have kept it secret. I wrote this to——, but he was very annoyed—"

On 5 August he writes of me:

\* Chertkov.

\* The story of the making of the will is related by F. A. Strakhov, *Petersburgskaya Gazetta*, November, 1911. S. A. T.

"It is painful the constant secrecy and fear for her. . . ."

On 10 August he writes:

"It is good to feel oneself guilty, as I do. . . ." And again: "My relations with all of them are difficult; I cannot help desiring death. . . ."

Clearly the pressure brought to bear upon him tormented him. One of his friends, P. I. B. <sup>v</sup>,<sup>67</sup> was of opinion that no secret should be made of the will, and he told Leo Nikolaevich so. At first he agreed with the opinion of this true friend, but he went away and Leo Nikolaevich submitted to another influence though at times he was obviously oppressed by it. I was powerless to save him from that influence, and for Leo Nikolaevich and myself there began a terrible period of painful struggle which made me still more ill. The sufferings of my hot and harassed heart clouded my reasoning powers, while Leo Nikolaevich's friends worked continually, deliberately, subtly upon the mind of an old man whose memory and powers were growing feeble.<sup>68</sup> They created around him who was dear to me



an atmosphere of conspiracy, of letters received secretly, letters and articles sent back after they had been read, mysterious meetings in forests for the performance of acts essentially disgusting to Leo Nikolaevich; after their performance he could no longer look me or my sons straight in the face, for he had never before concealed anything from us; it was the first secret in our life and it was intolerable to him. When I guessed it and asked whether a will was not being made, and why it was concealed from me, I was answered by a "no" or by silence. I believed that it was not a will. It meant, therefore, that there was some other secret of which I knew nothing, and I was in despair with the perpetual feeling that my husband was being carefully set against me and that a terrible and fatal ending was in front of us.<sup>69</sup> Leo Nikolaevich's threats to leave the house became more and more frequent, and this threat added to my torment and increased my nervousness and ill-health.

I shall not describe in detail Leo Nikolaevich's going away. So much has been and will be written about it, but no one will

know the real cause. Let *his* biographers try to find out.

When I read in the letter which Leo Nikolaevich sent me through our daughter Alexandra that he had gone away finally and for ever, I felt and clearly understood that without him—and especially after all that had happened—life would be utterly impossible, and instantly I made up my mind to put an end to all my sufferings by throwing myself into the pond in which some time before a girl and her little brother had been drowned. But I was rescued, and, when Leo Nikolaevich was told of it, he wept bitterly, as his sister, Marie Nikolaevna, wrote to me, but he could not get himself to return.<sup>70</sup>

After Leo Nikolaevich's going away an article appeared in the newspapers expressing the joy of one of his most "intimate" friends at the event.<sup>71</sup>

## XII

ALL my children came to Yasnaya Polyana and called in a specialist on nervous diseases and had a nurse to be with me. For five days I ate nothing and did not take a drop of water.

I felt no hunger, but my thirst was acute. In the evening of the fifth day my daughter Tanya persuaded me to drink a cup of coffee, by saying that, if father summoned me, I would be so weak that I should be unable to go.

Next morning we received a telegram from the newspaper *Russkoye Slovo* that Leo Nikolaevich had fallen ill at Astapovo and that his temperature was 104. The "intimate" friend had received a telegram before this and had already left, carefully concealing from his family the place where the patient was lying. We took a special

train at Tula and went to Astapovo. Our son Serge on his way to his estate had been overtaken by a telegram from his wife who had sent it at our daughter Alexandra's request, and he was already with his father.

This was the beginning of new and cruel sufferings for me. Round my husband was a crowd of strangers and outsiders, and I, his wife who had lived with him for forty-eight years, was not admitted to see him. The door of the room was locked, and, when I wanted to get a glimpse of my husband through the window, a curtain was drawn across it. Two nurses who were told off to look after me held me firmly by the arms and did not allow me to move. Meanwhile Leo Nikolaevich called our daughter Tanya to him and began asking all about me, believing me to be in Yasnaya Polyana. At every question he cried, and our daughter said to him: "Don't let us talk about mama, it agitates you too much." "Ah, no," he said, "that is more important to me than anything." He also said to her, but already indistinctly: "A great deal of trouble

is falling upon Sonya; we have managed it badly."

No one ever told him that I had come, though I implored every one to do so. It is difficult to say who was responsible for this cruelty. Every one was afraid of accelerating his death by agitating him; that was also the doctors' opinion.<sup>72</sup> Who can tell? Perhaps our meeting and my ways of looking after him to which he was accustomed, might have revived him. In one of his letters to me, which I have recently published, Leo Nikolaevich writes that he dreads falling ill without me.

The doctors allowed me to see my husband when he was now hardly breathing, lying motionless on his back, with his eyes already closed. I whispered softly some tender words in his ear, hoping that he might still hear how I had been all the time there in Astapovo and how I loved him to the end. I don't remember what more I said to him, but two deep sighs, as though the result of a terrible effort, came as an answer to my words, and then all was still. . . .

All the days and nights that followed, until his body was removed, I spent by the dead, and in me too life became cold. The body was taken to Yasnaya Polyana; a multitude of people came there, but I saw and recognized no one, and the day after the funeral I collapsed with the same illness, pneumonia, though in a less dangerous form, and I was in bed for eighteen days.

A great comfort to me at the time was the presence of my sister Tatyana Andreevna Kuzminskii, and of Leo Nikolaevich's cousin, Varvara Valeryanovna Nagornaya. My children, tired out, returned to their families.

### XIII

AND then there began my lonely life in Yasnaya Polyana, and the energy which I used to spend on life was and is directed only to this, that I may endure my sorrowful existence worthily and with submission to the will of God. I try to occupy myself only with what in some way or another concerns the memory of Leo Nikolaevich.

I live in Yasnaya Polyana keeping the house and its surroundings as they were when Leo Nikolaevich was alive, and looking after his grave. I have kept for myself two hundred desyatins of land with the apple orchard and the plantations, the making of which had given us such pleasure. The greater part of the land (475 desyatins), with the fine, carefully preserved woods, I sold to my daughter Alexandra to be transferred to the peasants.<sup>73</sup>

I also sold my Moscow house to the municipality,<sup>74</sup> and I sold the last edition of the works of Leo Tolstoy, and gave all the proceeds to my children. But they, and particularly the grandchildren, are so numerous! Including the daughters-in-law and myself, we are now a family of thirty-eight, and my help was, therefore, far from satisfactory.

I always feel in my heart profound gratitude to the Sovereign Emperor for granting me a pension, which allows me to live in security and to keep the manor of Yasnaya Polyana.

Three years have now passed. I look sadly on the havoc in Yasnaya Polyana, how the trees which we planted are being cut down, how the beauty of the place is gradually being spoiled, now that everything has been handed over to the timber-merchants and peasants who frequently have painful quarrels, now about the land and now about the woods. And what is going to happen to the manor and the house after my death?

Almost daily I visit the grave; I thank God for the happiness granted to me in



early life, and as to the last troubles between us, I look upon them as a trial and a redemption of sin before death. Thy will be done.<sup>75</sup>

COUNTESS SOPHIE TOLSTOY.

OCTOBER 28, 1913.

YASNAYA POLYANA.



## NOTES



## NOTES

1. In *The Book of Genealogies of the Nobility of the Moscow Government*, Vol. I, page 122, it is said of S. A. T.'s father: "Andrey Evstafevich, son of a chemist, born 9 April, 1808, a physician on the staff of the Moscow Palace Control, collegiate assessor 1842, State Councillor 1864."

2. This was the former name of the Commandant's Board.

3. Alexander Alexandrovich Bers, first cousin of S. A. T.

4. Born 3 December, 1789, died 25 March, 1855. Buried in Petersburg in the Volkov Lutheran Cemetery. *Peterburgskii Necropol*, Petersburg, 1912, Vol. I, page 204.

5. In *The Book of Genealogies of the Nobility of the Moscow Government*, Vol. I, page 122, the Bers are included under Section III, *i. e.* among those families which were promoted to the title of nobility through the civil service. The year of their promotion was 1843. The right to the coat-of-arms was granted by Supreme Order to the father of S. A. T. in 1847. See V. Lukomskii and

S. Troinizkii, *List of persons to whom has been granted by H. I. M. the right to coats-of-arms and the title of nobility of the All-Russian Empire and of the Kingdom of Poland*, Petersburg, 1911, page 14.

6. Alexander Evstafevich Bers, born 18 February, 1807, died 6 September, 1871. See *Petersburgskii Necropol*, Vol. I, page 204; also V. Lukomskii and S. Troinizkii, page 14.

7. In the Tula Province, twenty-five versts from Yasnaya Polyana.

8. A. M. Islenev, born 16 July, 1794, died 23 April, 1882. Leo Tolstoy, who knew him well, described him as the father in *Childhood Boyhood and Youth*. See P. Sergeenko, *From the Life of L. N. Tolstoy and How Count L. N. Tolstoy Lives and Works*, Moscow, 1898, page 40.

9. The well-known Vladimir Alexandrovich Islavin, State Councillor, born 29 November, 1818, died 27 May, 1895, author of the *The Samoyeds, their Domestic and Social Life*, Petersburg, 1847, which at the time was much discussed in newspapers and magazines. See V. I. Maezkov's *Systematic Catalogue of Russian Books*, A. F. Basunov, Petersburg, 1869, page 404.

10. There were five sons and three daughters, *The Book of Genealogies*, Vol I, pages 122 and 123. The best known of these, besides Sophie Andreevna, were: Tatyana Andreevna (by marriage Kuzminskii) born 24 October 1846, the

author of *My Reminiscences of Countess Marie Nikolaevna Tolstoy*, Petersburg, 1914; Stepan Andreevich Bers, born 21 July 1855, author of *Reminiscences of L. N. Tolstoy*, Smolensk, 1894; Peter Andreevich Bers, born 26 August 1849, died 19 May 1910, the editor of *Detskii Otdikh* (1881-1882), and co-editor with L. D. Obolenskii of the collection of *Stories for Children by I. S. Turgenev and L. N. Tolstoy*, 1883 and 1886; Vacheslav Andreevich Bers, born 3 May 1861, died 19 May, 1907, an engineer who was killed for no obvious reason by workmen during the revolutionary days in Petersburg. Leo N. Tolstoy was very fond of him. See P. Biryukov, *How L. N. T. Composed the Popular Calendar*, 1911.

11. A. Y. Davidov, 1823-1885, professor of mathematics in the University of Moscow, author of popular text-books on algebra and geometry.

12. N. A. Sergievskii, 1827-1892, a writer on theology, author of many scholarly theological books, founder and editor of *The Orthodox Review*, professor of theology in the University of Moscow.

13. In the *Natasha* of *War and Peace* there are many characteristics of S. A. T. and of her sister, Tatyana Andreevna Kuzminskii. According to S. A. T., Leo Nikolaevich made the following remark about his heroine: "I took Tanya, ground her up with Sonya, and there came

out Natasha." See P. Biryukov, *Biography of L. N. T.*, Vol. II, page 32.

14. In S. A. T.'s story *Natasha* L. N. T. recognized himself in the hero, Dublitskii, and he wrote to her in September, 1862: "I am Dublitskii, but to marry merely because I needed a wife—that I could not do. I demand something tremendous, impossible from marriage; I demand that I should be loved as much as I am able to love." L. N. T. doubted whether a woman could fall in love with him deeply and completely, as he was not good-looking. On 28 August, 1862, he put down in his diary: "I got up in the usual despondency. I thought out a society for apprentices. A sweet, placid night. Ugly face, don't think of marriage, your vocation is different and much has been given you instead." *L. N. T.'s Letters to his Wife*, edited by A. E. Gruzinskii, 1913. P. Biryukov, *Biography of L. N. T.*, Vol. I, page 471.

15. M. N. Tolstoi, 7 March, 1830—6 April, 1912, sister of L. N. T. In the 'sixties she went abroad with her brother Nikolai and lived with him at Hyères in the South of France. After her brother's death, M. N. T., overcome with grief, did not wish to return to Russia and settled for a short time in Algiers. She returned from there in 1862 and visited Yasnaya Polyana for a short time and met S. A. T. and her mother there. See T. A. Kuzminskii, *My Reminiscences of Marie N. Tolstoy*, Petersburg, 1914. P. Biryukov, *Countess*



Marie N. Tolstoy, in "*Russkaya Vedomostii*," 1912, Moscow. A. Khiryakov, *L. N. Tolstoy's Sister*, in "*Solitse Rossii*," 1912. S. Tolstoy, *To the Portrait of Countess Marie N. Tolstoy* in *Tolstovkii Ezhegodnik*, 1912. L. N. Tolstoy's Letters to Marie N. Tolstoy in *New Collection of Letters of L. N. Tolstoy*, collected by P. A. Sergeenko, edited by A. E. Gruzinskii, Moscow, 1912, and Complete works of L. N. Tolstoy, Vols. XXI-XXIV, edited by P. I. Biryukov, Moscow, 1913.

16. S. A. T. here leaves out some curious details. According to her own account, Leo Nikolaevich followed the Bers family, first to Ivitsa, Tula Province, fifty versts from Yasnaya Polyana, and then to Moscow. Leo Nikolaevich's proposal to S. A. T., which was like Levin's to Kitty in *Anna Karenina*, took place at Ivitsa. See "The Marriage of L. N. Tolstoy," from the reminiscences of S. A. T. under the title "My Life," in *Russkoye Slovo*, 1912. Also P. Biryukov, *Biography of L. N. Tolstoy*, Vol. I, pages 464-473, and L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, pages 1-3.

17. The Bers family were convinced that L. N. T. was in love with Liza, the elder sister of S. A. T., and expected him to propose to her. This misunderstanding worried L. N. T. as he said in his letter to S. A. T. See L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, pages 1-3.

18. Orekov, a serf of Yasnaya Polyana, L. N. T.'s inseparable companion during the war in

Sevastopol, and later steward at Yasnaya Polyana. See I. Tolstoy, *My Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1914, pages 18, 22-23.

19. T. A. Ergolskii, born 1795, died 20 June 1874, a remote relation brought up in the Tolstoy family, taught Marie, Leo and his brothers, who lost their mother at an early age. In Tolstoy's house she was called aunt. See *Reminiscences of Childhood* and L. N. T.'s *Letters to T. A. Ergolskii*; also L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters*, 1848-1910, collected and edited by P. A. Sergeenko, L. N. Tolstoy's *Diary*, Vol. I, 1847-1852, edited by V. G. Chertkov, Moscow, 1917.

20. The beginning of Chapter II, ending with the words "and in copying out his writings," is incorporated literally by S. A. T. from the first MS. There is also written in pencil by her "This is new." The statement is not quite accurate. In the remainder of Chapter III, which is new, a small part of the original Chapter III, slightly altered, is incorporated. We shall quote this part in full:

"The first thing which I copied in my clumsy, but legible handwriting was *Polikushka*. For many, many years afterwards that work delighted me. I used to long for the evening when Leo N. would give me something newly written or corrected for me to copy.

"I was carried away by the newly created scenes and descriptions, and I tried to understand and

watch the artistic development and growth of ideas and creative activity in my husband's works. . . . ”

21. The beginning was published in two numbers of *Russkii Vvestnik*, 1865 and 1866, and under the title of *The Year 1805* was later published in book form, Moscow, 1866. Tolstoy returned to the Decembrists when he had finished *Anna Karenina*, but was again disappointed. “My Decembrists are again God knows where; I don't even think of them,” he wrote to Fet in April, 1879, (Fet, *My Reminiscences*, Vol. II, page 364). The first three chapters of the Decembrists were published in a miscellaneous volume called *Twenty-five Years*, 1859-1884, Petersburg, 1884. But towards the end of his life Tolstoy again became interested in the Decembrists and began to study the period, see A. B. Goldenweiser, *Diary, Russkie Propilei*. Vol. II, pages 271-272, Moscow, 1916.

22. A. M. Zhemchuznikov and I. S. Aksakov visited Leo Nikolaevich in the middle of December, 1864, in Moscow at his father-in-law's house where he came to have his arm medically treated. It was then that he read to them some chapters from *War and Peace*. See L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, page 41.

23. There were a number of musical works which always made a deep impression upon Tolstoy. See list of musical works loved by L. N. Tolstoy, given by A. B. Goldenweiser, *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, pages 158-160; also musical works loved

by L. N. Tolstoy, in S. L. Tolstoy's *Reminiscences*.

24. Countess A. A. Tolstoy reproached Leo Nikolaevich for his long silence in a letter of 1 May 1863. Leo Nikolaevich wrote a four page letter in reply, but did not send it; later in the autumn of 1863 he wrote another letter, which he sent. The quotation referred to is, evidently, from the letter which was not sent, and which, as far as we know, has not appeared in print.

25. This quotation from L. N. T.'s Diary is also given in Biryukov's Biography, but in somewhat different form. He also gives a detailed sketch of the work, which Tolstoy wrote in his diary; see Biryukov, Vol. II, pages 27-28.

26. N. A. Lyubimov, 1830-1897, well-known professor of physics at the University of Moscow, a collaborator with Katkov and K. Leontev in editing the *Russkii Vyestnik* and *Moskovskaya Vedomosti*.

27. Strakhov's articles on *War and Peace* were published in *Zarya*, 1869 and 1870, and in book form in 1871. His articles on Tolstoy and Turgenev appeared in book form under the title, *Critical Articles on I. S. Turgenev and L. N. Tolstoy*, second edition, 1887.

28. Edmond About, 1828-1885, the French writer to whom Turgenev sent a copy of *War and Peace*, translated by Princess Paskevich, and a letter from which the above quotation is taken.

M. About published the letter in *Le XIX e Siècle*, 23 January, 1880, under the title "*Une Lettre de Tourguéneff*."

29. Vasilii Yakoblevich Mirovich, 1740-1764, a lieutenant in the Smolenskii infantry regiment, executed for his attempt to rescue Ivan Antonovich from prison. His story formed the plot of G. P. Danilevskii's novel *Mirovich* (Petersburg, 1886).

30. From the sketch of the year 1831-2: "The guests were arriving at the country-house." See Pushkin, edited by S. A. Vengerov, Petersburg, 1910, Vol. IV, pages 255-258.

31. In P. Biryukov's Biography, Vol. II, page 205, the words are given thus: "That is how one should begin. The reader is at once made to feel the interest of the plot. Another writer would begin to describe the guests, the rooms, but Pushkin goes straight to the point."

32. This quotation is a combination of two passages from L. N. T.'s letter to Countess A. A. Tolstoy of December, 1874. In the beginning of this letter he says that he has written a letter to her, but has torn it up and is writing another. It is possible that S. A. T. is quoting from the original letter.

33. Peter, eighteen months old, 18 November, 1873; Nikolai, two months old, February, 1875; and the daughter born prematurely, November, 1875.

34. T. A. Ergolskii (see note 19), and Pelageya Ilinishna Yushkov, the sister of L. N. T.'s father, died 22, December, 1875. This death particularly affected Tolstoy. He wrote to Countess A. A. Tolstoy: "It is strange, but the death of this old woman of eighty affected me more than any other death. . . . Not an hour passes without my thinking of her." *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. I, pages 262-3.

35. From Fet's poem: "I repeated: 'When I will. . . .'" Later Fet evidently rewrote the poem; his last four lines are:

In my hand—what a marvel—  
Is your hand.  
And on the grass—two emeralds.  
Two glow-worms.

See A. A. Fet, *Complete Works*, Vol. I, page 427, Petersburg, 1912.

36. Five poems are known to have been dedicated by Fet to S. A. Tolstoy, see *Complete Works*, Vol. I, pages 413, 414, and 449.

37. A few months after his visit to Yasnaya Polyana Turgenev wrote to Fet: "I was very glad to make it up again with Tolstoy, and I spent three pleasant days with him; his whole family is very sympathetic and his wife is a darling." See Fet, *My Reminiscences*, Vol. II, page 355, Moscow, 1890.

38. Wilkie Collins, 1824-1889; his novel *The*

*Woman in White*, was translated into Russian under the same title, Petersburg, 1884.

39. The house was bought in 1882 in the Khmovnicheskii Pereulok.

40. An allusion to V. G. Chertkov who became acquainted with Tolstoy in 1883. See P. A. Boulanger, *Tolstoy and Chertkov*, Moscow, 1911; A. M. Khiryakov, "Who is Chertkov?" in *Kievskaya Starina*, 1910; P. Biryukov, *Biography*, Vol. II, pages 471-3, 479-480; V. Mikulich, *Shadows of the Past*, Petersburg, 1914; Ilya Tolstoy, *My Reminiscences*, pages 234-5, 247, 265, 269-275; Countess A. A. Tolstoy, "Reminiscences" in *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. I, pages 36-38.

41. S. A. T. for a long time did not believe in the seriousness of Leo Nikolaevich's searchings, considering them a weakness, a disease due to overwork and the playing of a part. See Biryukov, *Biography*, pages 474-478; L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, pages 196-8.

42. A. P. Bobrinskii, Minister of Transport 1871-1874, and a disciple of Radstock; Tolstoy was struck by "the sincerity and warmth of his belief." See *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. I, pages 245, 265, 268, and 275.

43. An English preacher who in the middle of the 'seventies lived in Petersburg and preached with success in aristocratic houses. A short, but good, description of Radstock is given by Countess A. A. Tolstoy, who knew him personally, in her

letter to L. N. T. of 28 March, 1876, *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. I, pages 267-8.

44. S. S. Urusov, 1827-1897, an intimate friend of Tolstoy ever since the Crimean War, a landowner and a deeply religious man. Tolstoy corresponded with him and often stayed with him in his country-house at Spassko. Urusov translated into French Tolstoy's *In What do I Believe?*

45. But Tolstoy did not recognize the Gospel which serves as the foundation of the orthodox faith, and he interpreted the Gospel in his own way. It is strange that S. A. T. did not realize this. In this respect Countess A. A. Tolstoy, who also differed from Leo Nikolaevich on religious questions and was deeply pained by the difference, was more understanding and consistent. She wrote of Tolstoy's *Gospel*: "Your crude denial and bold perversions of the divine book caused me extreme indignation. Sometimes I had to stop reading and throw the book on the floor." See *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. I, page 44.

46. It is interesting to compare the autobiography of S. A. T. with Tolstoy's play *And Light Shines in Darkness*. In this Marie Ivanovna, a character taken from S. A. T., uses the family, children, house, and so on, as the chief arguments against the attempts of Nikolai Ivanovich to arrange their life in accordance with his views. She says: "I have to bring them up, feed them, bear them. . . . I don't sleep at nights, I nurse, I keep



the whole house. . . ." And the husband "wishes to give everything away. . . . He wants me at my time of life to become a cook, washerwoman." See Act I, scenes xix and xx; Act II, scene ii.

47. L. D. Urusov, died 6, October, 1885, a devoted friend and enthusiastic follower of Tolstoy. When he died in the Crimea, where he had gone with Tolstoy, Urusov, according to Countess A. A. Tolstoy, left to his son who was with him Tolstoy's letters, as the greatest treasures which he was leaving him. See *Tolstovskii Musei*, Vol. II; L. N. Tolstoy's *Correspondence with N. N. Strakhov*; L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, pages 255-266.

48. Tolstoy lost his suit-case, containing MSS., books, and proofs, in 1883 on his way to Yasnaya Polyana. Among the lost MSS. were several chapters of *In What do I Believe?* which Tolstoy had to rewrite. Biryukov, *Biography*, Vol. II, pages 457-8.

49. Another allusion to Chertkov, who in the middle of the 'eighties began taking Tolstoy's MSS. to England.

50. Tolstoy himself translated this work from the Greek, and twice wrote a preface to it, in 1885 and 1905. See L. N. Tolstoy's *Diary*, 1895-1899, edited by V. G. Ghertkov, second edition, Moscow, 1916, page 46.

51. As far as we know, this translation has not been published.

52. Her letter to the Metropolitan Antonius of 26 February, 1901, copies of which were sent to the other Metropolitans and to the Attorney to the Synod. The letter and the answer of the Metropolitan Antonius were published in many newspapers.

53. A short article in the form of a letter to the editor, on Leonid Andreyev on the appearance of Burenin's critical Sketches in *Novoe Vremya*, 1903. At the time it attracted great attention in the press owing to the exceptional bitterness with which S. A. T. attacked Andreyev and in general all modern novelists. She wrote: "One would like to continue M. Burenin's splendid article, adding ever more ideas of the same kind, raising higher and higher the standard for artistic purity and moral power in contemporary literature. Works of Messieurs Andreyevs ought not to be read, nor glorified, nor sold out, but the whole Russian public ought to rise in indignation against the dirt which in thousands of copies is being spread over Russia by a cheap journal and by repeated editions of publishers who encourage them. If Maxim Gorky, undoubtedly a clever and gifted writer from the people, introduces a good deal of cynicism and nudeness into the scenes in which he paints the life of a certain class, one always, nevertheless, feels in them a sincere sorrow for all the evil and suffering which is endured by the poor, ignorant, and drunken of fallen humanity.

In the works of Maxim Gorky one can always dwell on some character or pathetic moment in which, one feels, the author, grieving for the fallen, has a clear knowledge of what is evil and what good, and he loves the good. But in Andreyev's stories one feels that he loves and takes delight in the baseness in the phenomena of vicious human life, and with that love of vice he infects the undeveloped, the reading public which, as M. Burenin says, is untidy morally, and the young who cannot yet know life. . . . The wretched new writers of contemporary fiction, like Andreyev, are only able to concentrate upon the dirty spots in the human fall and proclaim to the uneducated, the half-intelligent reading public, and invite them to examine deep into the decayed corpse of fallen humanity and to shut its eyes to the whole of God's spacious and beautiful world with its beauty of nature, with the greatness of art, with the high aspirations of human souls, with the religious and moral struggle and the great ideals of good. . . ." *Novoe Vremya*, 1903.

54. Three fragments of this have been published: "L. N. Tolstoy's Marriage" in *Russkoe Slovo*, 1912; "On the Drama, *The Power of Darkness*" in *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, 1912, pages 17-23; and "L. N. Tolstoy's Visits to the Optina Monastery" in *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, 1913, Part III, pages 3-7.

55. The history of these MSS. has been dis-

cussed at great length in newspapers and magazines. The gist of the matter is as follows. By Tolstoy's will everything written by him up to the date of his death. "wherever it may be found and in whose possession," was to pass to his daughter Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy. She laid claim to the MSS. deposited in the Historical Museum. But S. A. T. opposed this, declaring that the MSS. had been given to her as a gift by Tolstoy, were her own property, and therefore could not be included in his will. The authorities of the Historical Museum refused both parties access to the MSS. until the question had been settled by a court. The history of the case is given in *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik* for 1913. Part V, pages 3-10, and in the journal *Dela i Dni*, 1921, pages 271-293, in which A. S. Nikolaev gave an account of the case, re Count L. N. Tolstoy's MSS.

56. The letter of 8 July, 1897. On the envelope Tolstoy wrote: "Unless I direct otherwise, this letter shall after my death be handed over to Sophie Andreevna." The letter was entrusted to N. L. Obolenskii, Tolstoy's son-in-law. See L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to his Wife*, pages 524-526.

57. Tolstoy announced this in a letter to the editor of *Russkaya Vedomostii* which was published in the paper on 19 September, 1891. The letter is reprinted in the supplement to L. N. Tolstoy's *Diary*, 1895-1899, second edition, pages 241-242.

58. The death of Vanichka was a terrible blow to Tolstoy who "loved him, as the youngest child, with all the force of an elderly parent's attachment." With him the last tie binding Tolstoy to his family was broken. Ilya Tolstoy was inclined to think that there was "a certain inner connection" between the child's death and Tolstoy's attempt to leave Yasnaya Polyana in 1897. See Ilya Tolstoy, *My Reminiscences*, pages 214-219.

59. Sergei Ivanovich Taneev, 1856-1915, who for three years consecutively, 1894-6, came to stay in the summer with the Tolstoy's at Yasnaya Polyana.

60. The story of Tolstoy's illness and his life at Gaspra is told in the fine reminiscences of Dr. S. Y. Elpatevskii, the well-known writer and doctor who treated Tolstoy, entitled "Leo N. Tolstoy, Reminiscences and Character," *Rosskoe Bogatstvo*, Number XI, 1912, pages 199-232; also S. Elpatevskii, *Literary Reminiscences*, Moscow, 1916, pages 26-49.

61. There was a stern struggle between Sophie Andreevna Tolstoy and Chertkov over Tolstoy's diaries almost from the first moment of his acquaintance with Tolstoy. Originally the diaries were in Chertkov's hands. But in October, 1895, S. A. T. insisted upon their return to Tolstoy. On 5 November, 1895, Tolstoy wrote in his diary: "I have gone through a great deal of unpleasantness with regard to fulfilling my promise

to Sophie Andreevna; I have read through my diaries for seven years." After he had read them, the diaries were handed over to S. A. T. who sent them for safe-keeping to the Rumyantsev Museum and later to the Historical Museum. The later diaries, ending with 19 May, 1900, were also handed over to S. A. T. The diaries of the last ten years, of which S. A. T. is speaking here, turned out to be in Chertkov's possession. It cost S. A. T. not only much effort, but tears and even her health, in order to get them back. Personally and in writing, and also through V. F. Bulgakov, she entreated and implored Chertkov to return them, but everything proved of no avail. An atmosphere, painful for the whole family, was thus created, and Tolstoy was literally stifled, finding himself between the stubbornness of a morbid woman and the fear of offending a no less stubborn man, Chertkov. It ended by Tolstoy, in the middle of July, 1910, taking the diaries from Chertkov and placing them for safe-keeping in the Tula bank, in order not to hurt either party. After Tolstoy's death, according to his will, the diaries passed to Alexandra L. Tolstoy. See L. N. Tolstoy's *Diary*, Vol. I, 1895-1899, pages 11, 12, and 6; L. N. Tolstoy's *Letters to His Wife*, page 493; V. F. Bulgakov, *Leo Tolstoy During the Last Years of his Life*, Moscow, 1918, pages 255, 261-263, and 265.

62. This will in the form of a letter was an

extract from Tolstoy's diary of 27, March, 1895.

. . . His request that his works should become public property was later made in his diary for 1907, also on 4 and 8 March, 1909.

63. Three copies of this extract from the diary were kept by Marie Nikolaevna Obolenskii, V. G. Chertkov, and Serge Tolstoy. Evidently S. A. T. did not know this. See *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, page 9.

64. According to A. B. Goldenweiser, Tolstoy, perhaps having reason to think that his will with regard to his works would not be carried out, decided to make a will which would be binding legally as well as morally. On 17 September, 1909, the will was drawn at Krekshino, and on the 18 it was signed by Tolstoy. By this will all his works, written after 1 January, 1881, both published and unpublished, became public property. Consequently the will meant that all works written and published before that date remained the property of the family. On 18 September on their return from Moscow, Alexandra L. Tolstoy went to see the lawyer N. K. Muravev and showed him the will. Muravev said that from a legal point of view the will was quite invalid, since according to law you could not leave property to "nobody," and he promised to draw up and send to Yasnaya Polyana the rough draft of a will. Two or three consultations took place at Muravev's house, at which there were present V. G. Chertkov,

stoy's letters and from extracts from his diaries that Tolstoy always had complete confidence in him as a true friend, and for that reason, in preference to all the members of his family, made him sole executor for his writings, by giving him the right to "omit" or "leave in" what he thought necessary. But Chertov does not say a single word either of the Moscow consultations of the friends or of the will of 1 November, 1909, and thus not only gives no answer to our questions, but excludes the possibility of our putting them, by skilfully passing direct from the Krekshino will to the last two wills made in the summer of 1910. Let us now hear what the third participant in the consultations has to say, namely Strakhov, who, in his own words, felt a "little doubt begin to stir within him," when the friends on 1 November, 1909, "carefully performed the transactions which are bound to have certain historical consequences." His article on how the will of 1 November, 1909, was drawn up fills in the gap which Chertkov passed over in silence.

Strakhov says nothing about the Krekshino will, in the making of which he took no part. . . . After the failure of the will at Krekshino, the new draft of a will was worked out at the Moscow consultations, and Strakhov left with the draft for Yasnaya Polyana on 26 October, when, as the friends supposed, Sophie Andreevna would be in Moscow. Their calculation was mistaken: S. A. T. was re-



turning to Yasnaya Polyana in the same train as Strakhov. But her presence did not prevent Strakhov from executing his mission brilliantly. When alone with Tolstoy, he explained that it was necessary to draw up a formal will transferring the rights in his literary property to a definite person or persons, and "he put before him the draft document and asked him to read it and sign it, if he approved of its contents." Tolstoy read the paper and "at once wrote at the bottom that he agreed with its contents; and then, after thinking for a little, he said: "The whole affair is very painful to me. And it is all unnecessary—in order to secure that my ideas are spread by such measures. Now Christ—although it is strange that I should compare myself with him—did not trouble that some one might appropriate his ideas as his personal property, nor did he record his ideas in writing, but expressed them courageously and went on the cross for them. His ideas have not been lost. Indeed no word can be completely lost, if it express the truth and if the person uttering it profoundly believe in its truth. But all these external measures for security come only from our non-belief in what we are uttering." Saying this Tolstoy left the room. Strakhov was undecided what to do, whether to oppose Tolstoy or to leave Yasnaya Polyana without having achieved anything. He made up his mind to oppose Tolstoy and attacked him in his most vulnerable spot.

stoy's letters and from extracts from his diaries that Tolstoy always had complete confidence in him as a true friend, and for that reason, in preference to all the members of his family, made him sole executor for his writings, by giving him the right to "omit" or "leave in" what he thought necessary. But Chertov does not say a single word either of the Moscow consultations of the friends or of the will of 1 November, 1909, and thus not only gives no answer to our questions, but excludes the possibility of our putting them, by skilfully passing direct from the Krekshino will to the last two wills made in the summer of 1910. Let us now hear what the third participant in the consultations has to say, namely Strakhov, who, in his own words, felt a "little doubt begin to stir within him," when the friends on 1 November, 1909, "carefully performed the transactions which are bound to have certain historical consequences." His article on how the will of 1 November, 1909, was drawn up fills in the gap which Chertkov passed over in silence.

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He said to him: "You mentioned Christ. He, indeed, took no thought about the dissemination of his words. But why? Because he did not write and, owing to the conditions of the time, received no payment for his ideas. But you write and have received payment for your writings, and now your family receives it. . . . If you will not do something to secure the public use of your writings, you will be indirectly furthering the establishment of the rights of private property in them by your family. . . . I shall not conceal from you that it has been painful for us who are your friends to hear you reproached because, in spite of your denial of private property in land, you transferred your estate to the ownership of your wife. It will also be painful to hear people saying that Tolstoy, in spite of his knowledge that his declaration in 1891 had no legal validity, took no steps to ensure his wish being carried out and thus consciously assisted the transference of his literary property to his family. I cannot say how painful it will be for your friends to hear that, Leo Nikolae-vich, after your death, and the complete triumph of your survivors' monopoly over your writings during the long fifty years of copyright, and all this with the definite knowledge of your views on the subject."

Tolstoy acknowledged Strakhov's considerations to be a "weighty argument" and, promising to think it over, left the room. He had to wait a

long time for the answer. Tolstoy went for a ride, had a sleep, dined, and only after his dinner called Strakhov and Alexandra Lvovna into his study and said to them: "I shall surprise you by my ultimate decision. . . . I want, Sasha, to leave to you alone everything, do you see? Everything, not excepting what I reserved in the declaration in the newspapers. . . . The details you may think over with Vladimir Grigorevich."

Strakhov informed Chertkov by telegram of the "successful" result of his conversations with Tolstoy. On 1 November, 1909, he returned to Yasnaya Polyana with Goldenweiser, this time to witness the signature of the new will by which "everything" passed to Alexandra Lvovna. This time Strakhov entered Yasnaya Polyana with a "certain pricking of conscience," because he had hid his purpose from Sophie Andreevna. The signing of the will took place in the setting of a conspiracy. Strakhov says that, when Tolstoy took the pen, "he locked the two doors of his study one after the other." And it was so strange and unnatural to see Tolstoy in the part of a man taking steps against unwanted visitors . . .

65. Indeed, some time before Tolstoy's going away, S. A. T.'s mind was unhinged. This became very clear in the middle of 1910. By the common consent of the family, Dr. N. V. Nikitin and the well-known alienist Rossolino were summoned from Moscow to Yasnaya Polyana and

they found her to be suffering from hysteria and paranoia in the early stage (see *Dela i Dni*, 1921, Number I, page 288). As regards paranoia, the data existing seem to show that the doctors were mistaken, since paranoia belongs to the class of incurable diseases and comparatively soon passes from the first to the second stage, characterized by frenzy and acute madness, from which, so far as is known, S. A. T. did not suffer. On the contrary her mental and bodily health improved considerably after Tolstoy's death. But no doubt the doctors' diagnosis of hysteria was correct. There is evidence that she had a predisposition to that disease from her birth. Her parents also suffered from lack of mental balance, as may be seen from Tolstoy's letters to his wife. We read in them: "L. A. and A. E. (her mother and father) love each other, and yet both seem to make it the purpose of their lives to irritate each other over trifles, they spoil their own lives and those of all who surround them, and especially their daughters'. This atmosphere of irritation is very painful, even to outsiders." "A. E. . . . is difficult because of his unceasing and overpowering care of his health, which would indeed be much better, if he thought less about it and himself." "Lyubov Alexandrovna is wonderfully like you. . . . Even the faults are the same in you and in her. I listen sometimes to her beginning to talk confidently about something which she does not know, and to make positive as-

sertions and exaggerate—and I recognize you.” Signs of this disease, though in a mild form, were observed in S. A. T. from the first years of her married life. But the strength of her constitution and the healthy elements of her mind for a long time had the upper hand, and the symptoms were not obviously visible. But then the bearing and nursing of children, the complicated business of the estate, the strain on the mind for many years resulting from the differences with her husband and her struggle with Chertkov—all this sapped her mental and physical powers and made it possible for the morbid characteristics to assume an acute form. Even in 1910, before Tolstoy’s going away, she was definitely a sick person.

66. The will of 1 November, 1909, was drawn in correct legal form, but Tolstoy made the following addition to it: “In case, however, of my daughter, Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy dying before me, all the above-mentioned property I bequeath absolutely to my daughter Tatyana Lvovna Sukhotin.” Consequently a new will was drawn up on 17 July, 1910, but a formal mistake was made in it though Goldenweiser’s fault, who left out the words: “being of sound mind and memory.” Owing to this it became necessary to draw up a will, the fourth in number, which was copied and signed by Tolstoy on 22 July, 1910, and not, as S. A. T. says, on 23 July.

Such is the bare history of the two last wills, as

related by Chertkov. But he does not tell us how and under what circumstances these wills were signed. This task Sergeenko junior, Chertkov's secretary, has taken upon himself: he tells us how the fourth will was made. According to him, on 22 July, Tolstoy fetched the witnesses who were with Chertkov at Telyatenki and went on horseback with them to the old forest of Zaseka, and there in the depths of the forest, sitting on the stump of a great tree, he copied his will, first from a draft and then at Goldenweiser's dictation. From the expression on Tolstoy's face Sergeenko saw clearly that "although the whole business was painful to him, he did it with a firm conviction of its moral necessity. No hesitation was visible."

67. P. I. Biryukov, an old friend of Tolstoy, author of the *Biography of L. N. Tolstoy*, two volumes, Moscow, 1906-8. On 1 August, 1910, according to V. F. Bulgakov, Biryukov, during a visit to Yasnaya Polyana, pointed out to Tolstoy "the undesirable atmosphere of conspiracy which the business of the will was assuming. To call the whole family together and explain his will to them would, perhaps, correspond better with Tolstoy's general spirit and convictions." After his conversation with Biryukov Tolstoy was extremely disturbed. When V. F. Bulgakov, who was going to Chertkov's estate, asked him whether there was anything which he wanted him to say to Chertkov, Tolstoy replied: "No. I want to



write to him, but I will do it to-morrow. Tell him, I am in such a state that I want nothing and. . . ." Tolstoy stopped for a little. "And am waiting. I am waiting for what is going to happen and am prepared for anything." Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy and the Chertkovs were very annoyed at Biryukov's behaviour, thinking that his interference was ill-timed and only disconcerted Tolstoy. See V. F. Bulgakov, *Leo Tolstoy During the Last Years of his Life*, pages 277-8.

68. The typewritten MS. has "whose powers were growing feeble." The words "and memory" were inserted in S. A. T.'s handwriting. This is clearly no exaggeration. Ilya Tolstoy also says that Tolstoy during his last year of life had several fainting fits and that after them he used for a short time to lose his memory to such an extent that he did not recognize his near relations, and once even asked about his brother who had been dead fifty years: "And how is Mitenka?" Bulgakov, who lived at Yasnaya Polyana in 1910, gives not a few similar instances. Tolstoy confirms it himself. In June 1910, when asked whether he had seen the Tula asylum, he replied: "I don't remember. I have forgotten. A phenomenon, like the weakening of memory, must interest you mental specialists. My memory has become very bad." See Ilya Tolstoy, *My Reminiscences*, pages 246-7 and 272; Bulgakov, *Leo Tolstoy*, pages 34-5, 267, 289, and 323.

69. Was it not the desire to discover this secret which made S. A. T. steal into Tolstoy's study at nights and search there, as is stated by Tolstoy in his diary? See *Dela i Dni*, 1921, Number I, pages 290-1.

70. This letter is quoted in *My Reminiscences*, by Ilya Tolstoy, pages 261-3.

71. This of course refers to Chertkov's letter on the occasion of Tolstoy's going away, published in *Russkaya Vedomostii*, 1910, Number 252. An extract is quoted in Chertkov's pamphlet, *On the Last Days of L. N. Tolstoy*, Moscow, 1911, page 15.

72. This was also the opinion of all the members of the family who were at Astapovo. See Ilya Tolstoy's, *My Reminiscences*, pages 253-5.

73. The sale of Yasnaya Polyana has its history. S. A. T. and her sons originally approached the Government and asked whether it would acquire Yasnaya Polyana for the State. The Council of Ministers discussed the question at the two sittings of 26 May and 14 October, 1911. At the first sitting it was decided to acquire Yasnaya Polyana at the price of 500,000 roubles suggested by the heirs; but at the second sitting the Council adopted the view of the Attorney to the Synod, V. K. Sabler, and the Minister of Education, L. A. Kasso, who held it inadmissible that the Government should honour its enemies and enrich their children at the State's expense; and the question

of purchasing Yasnaya Polyana went no further. Later a Bill for its purchase was introduced in the Duma, but nothing came of it. . . . On 26 February, 1913, Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy bought Yasnaya Polyana for 400,000 roubles, which she had received from Sitin, the publisher, for the right of publishing a complete edition of Tolstoy's works. On 26 March, 1913, Tolstoy's long-cherished desire was fulfilled and the land of Yasnaya Polyana was transferred to the peasants. See *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, 1911, Number II, page 31, Numbers III, IV, and V, pages 190-4 and 198; 1913, Part V, pages 10-12.

74. On 15 November, 1912, the Moscow municipality acquired Tolstoy's house in Moscow with all its furniture for 125,000 roubles and decided to use it for a Tolstoy Museum and Library, and to build in the court-yard a new building for a Tolstoy School of sixteen classes. See *Tolstovskii Ezhegodnik*, 1911, Number II, pages 31-2, and Numbers III, IV, and V, pages 194-6.

75. The newspapers announced that S. A. T. died in October, 1919. We have not succeeded in verifying the date and, therefore, cannot vouch for its accuracy.





## APPENDIX



## APPENDIX I

### SEMEN AFANASEVICH VENGEROV

S. A. VENGEROV was born 5 April, 1855 and died 14 September, 1920. On leaving his public school in 1872, he entered the Academy of Medicine and Surgery in Petersburg and took the general course in natural science. He then changed to the Faculty of Law in the Petersburg University and graduated in 1879. A year later he graduated in the Historical and Philological Faculty in the Derpl University, after which he remained at the Petersburg University in order to prepare for the professorship of Russian Literature. In 1897 he began a course of lectures on the history of Russian literature at the Petersburg University, but was soon dismissed by the Minister of Education because of his liberal views. It was only in 1906 that VengeroV was again allowed to lecture in the University, and in 1910 he was made professor of the University for Women and of the Institute of Psychoneurology. At last in 1919 he was appointed Professor of Russian Literature in the



Petrograd University. In addition to his lectures, after 1908 he conducted in the University a special Pushkin school, and the work of this school was published in three volumes, *The Pushkinist*, 1914, 1916, and 1918. After the revolution, when The Library was established, Vengerov was appointed Director and managed the institution, under very unfavourable conditions, until his death.

"I can only remember three days in my whole life when I felt at leisure," Vengerov used to say. The intense industriousness of his life may be seen from the following incomplete list of his works: "Russian Literature in her Contemporary Representatives: I. S. Turgenev, 1875; I. I. Lazhechnikov, 1883; A. F. Pisemskii, 1884.

"Critico-Biographical Dictionary of Russian Authors and Men of Letters," Six volumes, 1889-1904. These six volumes only complete the first letter of the alphabet, most of the articles being written by Vengerov.

Russian Poetry. Seven volumes, 1893-1901.

Thirty volumes of Russian authors edited with notes about the writers.

"The Sources of the Dictionary of Russian Authors," four volumes, 1900-1917.

"Library of Great Writers," edited by Vengerov and containing the complete works of Shakespeare, Byron, Molière, and Pushkin.

"Outlines of the History of Russian Literature," 1907.

“Russian Literature of the Twentieth Century,”  
1890-1910.

“The Heroic Character of Russian Literature.”  
It will be seen from the above list that Vengerov devoted the whole of his life to Russian literature. As a writer and man of letters, he achieved considerable popularity.

## APPENDIX II

NIKOLAI NIKOLAEVICH STRAKHOV.

N. N. STRAKHOV was born 16 October, 1828, and died 24 January, 1896. He studied at the ecclesiastical seminary of Kostroma and completed his course in 1845. He then passed to the Faculty of Mathematics in the Petersburg University and took his degree in 1848. He then entered the Faculty of Natural Science and Mathematics in the Teachers' Training Institute and completed his course in 1851, after which he became a teacher of physics and mathematics. In 1857 he received the degree of Master of Zoology. In 1861 he gave up teaching and became the principal collaborator with the brothers Dostoevskii on the monthly magazine, *Vremya*. His chief writings were polemical. Under the nom-de-plume of "N. Kossizé," he wrote a series of articles which had a great success and were chiefly directed against the "westerners," radicals, and socialists, e. g. Chernisherskii, Pisarev. *Vremya*, which had a large circulation, was suppressed by the authorities because of an article by Strakhov, called "The Fatal Problem," which

dealt with Russian-Polish relations in a spirit of opposition to the Government. Being without work, Strakhov began translating books into Russian, chiefly on Philosophical, scientific, and literary subjects.

Tolstoy's friendship with Strakhov began in 1871. When someone asked him about the friendship, Strakhov sent him the following autobiographical note: "The origin of my acquaintance with L. N. Tolstoy in 1871 was as follows. After my articles on *War and Peace*, I decided to write him a letter asking him to let the *Sarya* have some of his work. He replied that he had nothing at present, but added a pressing invitation to come and see him at Yasnaya Polyana whenever an opportunity should present itself. In 1871 I received four hundred roubles from the *Sarya*, and in June I went to stay with my people in Poltava. On my way back to Petersburg I stopped at Tula for the night, and in the morning took a cab and drove out to Yasnaya Polyana. After that we used to see each other every year, that is, I used to stay a month or six weeks with him every summer. At times we quarrelled and grew cool to each other, but good feeling always won the day; his family got to like me, and now they see in me an old, faithful friend, which indeed I am."

With Strakhov Tolstoy was on very friendly terms, which allowed complete frankness between them. Tolstoy himself wrote of his correspondence

with Strakhov (in a letter of 6 February, 1906, to P. A. Sergeenko): "In addition to Alexandra Andreevna Tolstoy, I had two persons to whom I have written many letters which, as far as I can remember, might interest people interested in my personality. They are Strakhov and Prince Serge S. Urusov." (*Letters*, Vol. II, page 227.)

The friendship of Tolstoy and Strakhov lasted for twenty-five years, and on Strakhov's part there was thirty years adoration of Tolstoy's genius and of his great spiritual and intellectual qualities. V. V. Rosanov wrote the following after Strakhov's death: "Strakhov's attachment to Tolstoy was most deep and mystical: he loved him as the incarnation of the best and most profound aspirations of the human soul, as a special nerve in the huge body of mankind in which we others form parts less understanding and significant; he loved him for what was indefinite and incomplete in him. He loved in him the dark abyss, the bottom of which no one could see, from the depths of which still rise numbers of treasures; and there is no doubt that Tolstoy never lost a better friend."

Strakhov's works included: *From the History of Russian Nihilism*, 1890; *Essays on Pushkin and Other Poets*, 1888; *Biography of Dostoevskii*; *The Struggle of the West with our Literature*, three volumes, 1882-1886; and some scientific works.

## APPENDIX III

### TOLSTOY'S FIRST WILL

TOLSTOY'S first will was contained in the form of a letter in his diary of 27 March, 1895 and repeated in his diary of 1907, see Notes 62 and 63 above. The following is the text of the entry in the diary:—

My will is approximately as follows.

(Until I have written another this holds good.)

(1). To bury me where I die, in the cheapest cemetery, if I die in a town, and in the cheapest coffin, as paupers are buried. Flowers and wreaths are not to be sent, speeches are not to be made. If possible, bury me without priests or burial service. But if those who bury me dislike this, let them bury me in the ordinary way with a funeral service, but as cheaply and simply as possible.

(2.) My death is not to be announced in the newspapers, nor are obituary notices to be written.

(3.) All my papers are to be given to my wife, V. G. Chertkov, Strakhov, and to my daughters

Tanya and Masha,<sup>1</sup> for them, or for such of them as survive, to sort and examine. (I have myself struck out my daughter's names. They ought not to be bothered with this.)

I exclude my sons from this bequest not because I did not love them (I have come of late to love them better and better, thank God) and I know that they love me; but they do not altogether understand my ideas; they did not follow their development; and they may have views of their own which may lead them to keep what ought not to be kept and to reject what ought to be kept. I have taken out of the diaries of my bachelor life what is worth keeping. I wish them to be destroyed. Also in the diaries of my married life I wish to be destroyed everything which might hurt anyone if published. Chertkov has promised me to do this even during my lifetime, and knowing the great and undeserved love that he has for me and his moral sensibility I am sure that he will do it splendidly. I wish the diaries of my bachelor life to be destroyed not because I wish to conceal the wickedness of my life—my life was the usual unclean life of an unprincipled young man—but be-

<sup>1</sup> This extract from L. N. T.'s diary under date of March 27, 1895, is from his first will. The wishes expressed in this diary are again expressed by him in his diary for 1907. It was only in September 1909 in Krekshino that he drew up for the first time a legal will, attested by witnesses. Three copies of the diary of March 27, 1895 were kept; one by Marie Lvovna Obolensky; one by V. G. Chertkov; and one by Serge L. Tolstoy.

cause the diaries in which I recorded only the torments which arise from the consciousness of sin produce a false and one-sided impression and represent. . . . Well, let my diaries remain as they are. In them at least is seen how in spite of all the frivolity and immorality of my youth I yet was not deserted by God and though it was only in old age, I began, though only a little, to understand and love Him.

I write this not that I attribute great or even any importance to my papers, but because I know beforehand that after my death my books will be published, and will be talked about, and will be thought to be important. If that is so, it is better that my writings should not harm people.

As for the remainder of my papers I ask those who will have the arrangement of them not to publish everything, but only that which may be of use to people.

(4). With regard to the publishing rights of my former works—the ten volumes and the *A. B. C.*—I ask my heirs to give these to the public, *i. e.* to renounce the copyrights. But I only ask this, in no sense order it. It would be a good thing to do it. It would be good for you also. But if you do not wish to do it, that is your business. It means that you are not ready to do it. That my books for the last ten years have been sold was to me the most painful thing in my life.

(5). There is one more request, and it is the



most important. I ask all, relations and strangers alike, not to praise me (I know that this must happen, because it has happened during my life time and in the worst way possible). Also if people are going to occupy themselves with my writings, let them dwell upon those passages in which I knew that the Divine power spoke through me; and let them make use of them in their lives. There were times when I felt that I had become the agent of the Divine will. Often I was so impure, so filled with personal passions, that the light of this truth was obscured by my darkness; but at times the truth passed through me, and these were the happiest moments of my life. God grant that their passage through me did not profane those truths, and that people, notwithstanding the petty and impure character which they received from me, may feed on them. The value of my writings lies in this alone. And therefore I am to be blamed for them, but not praised.

That is all.

L. N. T.

## APPENDIX IV

### TOLSTOY'S WILL OF 22 JULY, 1910

THE following is the text of Tolstoy's will, written by him on 22 July, 1910, and proved for execution by the Tula High Court on 16 November, 1910:—

22 July, 1910, I, the undersigned, being of sound mind and memory, make the following disposition in the event of my death: all my literary works, both those already written and those which may be written between now and my death, both those which have already been published and those which are unpublished, my works of fiction as well as any other works finished or unfinished, dramatic works or those in any other form, translations, revisions, diaries, private letters, rough drafts, jottings, and notes,—in a word everything without any exception, written by me up to the day of my death, wherever such may be found or in whosever possession, whether in manuscript or in print, and also the rights of literary property in all my works, as well as the MSS. themselves and all my papers left

after my death—I bequeth in full ownership to my daughter, Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy. In the event of my daughter, Alexandra Lvovna Tolstoy, dying before me, I bequeath the above-mentioned absolutely to my daughter, Tatyana Lvovna Sukhotin. (Signed) LEO NIKOLAEVICH TOLSTOY.

I hereby bear witness that the above will was actually made, written by his own hand, and signed by Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy, who is of sound mind and memory, ALEXANDER BORESOVICH GOLDENWEISER, artist.

Witness to the same: ALEXEI PETROVICH SERGEENKO, citizen.

Witness to the same: ANATOLII DIONSEVICH RADINSKII, son of a lieutenant-colonel.

## APPENDIX V

### TOLSTOY'S GOING AWAY

THE following letter from Tolstoy to his daughter Alexandra and extracts from his diary give his own account of his going away, and will enable the reader to see something of his side of the question:

#### TOLSTOY'S LETTER TO HIS DAUGHTER ALEXANDRA LVOVONA

29 October, 1910, OPTINA MONASTERY.

" . . . will tell you all about me, my dear friend Sasha. It is hard. I can't help feeling it a great load on me. The chief thing is—not to do wrong. That is the difficulty. Certainly, I have sinned and shall sin, but I should wish to sin less.

This is the chief thing above all others, that I wish for you, the more so that I know that the task is terrible and beyond your powers at your age. I have not decided anything, and I do not want to decide. I am trying to do only what I can't help doing; and not to do what I need not do.

From my letter to Chertkov you will see, not

how I look at this question, but how I feel about it. I hope very much that good will come from the influence of Tanya and Serge.<sup>1</sup>

The chief thing is that they should realize and try to suggest to her (Countess S. A. T.) that this perpetual spying, eavesdropping, incessant complaining, ordering me about, as her fancy takes her, constant managing, pretended hatred of the man who is nearest and most necessary to me, with her open hatred of me and pretence of love,—that a life like this is not only unpleasant, but impossible; and if one of us is to drown himself, let it not be her on any account, but myself; that there is but one thing I want—freedom from her, from that falsehood, pretence, and spite with which her whole being is permeated.

Of course they cannot suggest this to her, but they can suggest to her that all her acts towards me not only do not express love but are inspired by the obvious wish to kill me, which she will achieve since I hope that the third fit which attacks me will save her as well as myself from the terrible state in which we have lived, to which I do not wish to return.

You see, my dear, how wicked I am. I do not conceal myself from you. I do not send for you yet, but I will as soon as I can, very shortly. Write and tell me how you are. I kiss you.

L. TOLSTOY.

<sup>1</sup> Tatyana L. Sukhotin and Count Serge L. Tolstoy are L. N. T.'s eldest children.

The following extracts from Tolstoy's diary which describe his actual flight and the circumstances that led up to it also throw light upon Countess Tolstoy's attitude to her husband, and completely refute the false accounts which she persisted in publishing everywhere from the day of Tolstoy's death until the present time.

FROM TOLSTOY'S DIARY

25 Oct. 1910. . . . Sophie Andreevna is as anxious as ever.

27 Oct. 1910. I got up very early. All night I had bad dreams. The difficulty of our relation is constantly increasing.

28 Oct. 1910. I went to bed at half past eleven. Slept till two. I woke, and again as on other nights heard steps and the opening of doors. On previous nights I did not look out of my door; now I looked and saw through a chink a bright light in my study and heard rustling. It is Sophie A. searching for something and probably reading my papers.

Yesterday she asked, indeed demanded, that I should not shut the door. Both her doors are open, so that my least movement is audible to her. Both during the day and during the night all my movements and words must be known to her and be under her control.

Again steps, a cautious opening of the door, and she passes by.

I do not know why this has roused in me such overpowering repulsion and indignation. I wanted to fall asleep, but could not, tossed about for an hour, lit the candle, and sat down.

The door opens and in comes S. A. asking about "my health," and surprised at seeing a light in my room.

The repulsion and indignation are growing. I am choking. I count my pulse: 97. I cannot lie down; and I suddenly come to a final decision to go.

I write a letter to her, and begin to pack only what things are needed for the journey. I wake Dushan,<sup>1</sup> then Sasha <sup>2</sup> they help me with the packing. It is night, pitch dark, I lose my way to the ledge; get into the wood; I am pricked by the branches; knocked against the trees; fall; lose my hat; cannot find it; get out with difficulty; walk home; take my cap; and with a lantern go to the stable, give an order to harness the horses. Sasha, Dushan, Varya <sup>3</sup> come there. I tremble, expecting that S. A. T. will pursue me.

But we leave. In Schekino we wait an hour for the train, and every minute I expect her to appear. But now we are in the train; we start.

<sup>1</sup> Doctor D. P. Makovitsii, one of the most intimate friends of the Tolstoy family, a doctor who lived with the Tolstoy's and who remained with L. N. T. until his death.

<sup>2</sup> L. N. T.'s daughter, Alexandra.

<sup>3</sup> Varvara Feskritov, S. A. T.'s late secretary.

The fear passes. And pity for her rises in me, but no doubt at all but that I have done what I ought to do. Perhaps I am wrong to justify myself, but I believe that I am saving myself—not Leo N. T., but that which at times exists, though ever so feebly, in me. . . .

29. Oct. 1910. Shamardino. . . . On the journey I have been thinking all the time about a way of escape from her and from my situation, but could think of none. But surely there will be some way, whether one likes it or not; it will come, but not in any way that one can foresee. What has to happen will happen. It is not my business. I got at Mashenka's 'the *Krug Chtenia*' and reading the quotation for the 28th, I was at once struck by the reply which seemed to be given purposely to refer to my situation. I need a trial; it is good for me. . . .















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